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LAST ISSUE

Central Eurasia

FBIS-SOV-96-164
Thursday
22 August 1996

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Daily Report
Central Eurasia

FBIS-SOV-96-164 *22 August 1996*

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CIS: ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 22 Aug

LD2208071196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0553 GMT 22 Aug 96

["Press Review" — ITAR-TASS headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW August 22 (Itar-Tass) — Newspapers highlight today an alarming situation in Chechnya in connection with the expiry of General Pulikovskiy's ultimatum. Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Izvestiya, Krasnaya Zvezda, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, Segodnya and other newspapers frontpage materials on this subject.

Rossiyskaya Gazeta carries a report from Groznyy, entitled "The city sentenced to death." Izvestiya expresses today a strong protest against a possible massacre in Groznyy after the expiry of the ultimatum. The main idea of the newspaper concerning the current situation with the war in the Caucasian republic, rumours about the whereabouts and health of the President and some puzzling manouvering in the top echelons of power is that the authorities seem to be stricken with paralysis, and the impression is that no on is governing the country.

Trud publishes an article by his political observer Yuriy Lepskiy, who asks in it about the same questions: the war in Chechnya has approached, perhaps, one of its most tragic moments, which demands especially wise decisions, and at this very moment the President leaves for the Valday area in order "to inspect a possible place for vacationing." Why? Why did General Pulikovskiy decide to take Groznyy by assault, as a result of which thousands of civilians may die together with militants? Lepskiy describes all that is going on in Chechnya these days as the "logic of madness."

Rossiyskiye Vesti publishes an article by Tatyana Sukhomlinova entitled "150 laws cannot replace one real law," which deals with the relationship between the federal and regional bodies of power. Another article, published by the newspaper, is entitled "Finance Ministry keeps courts on short rations." It deals with the situation in the Russian judicial system: the minimal financial requirements of general courts for 1996 amount to 5.5 trillion roubles, while the budget envisages the allocation for those purposes of only 1.9 trillion roubles.

Rossiyskaya Gazeta publishes an article by Vladimir Klimov about his interview with senior officials of the Defence Ministry concerning the presidential decree, which dealt with the transfer of the Armed Forces to a professional basis before 2000. After the interview Klimov asked himself: whom do them fear more at the Defence Ministry — a nuclear bomb or the Defence Minister?

Notwithstanding all the recent developments, Russia's intellectual potential is not being eroded. Rossiyskaya Gazeta carries an article by Oleg Bobrakov, who writes that specialists from one of the defence industry enterprises in the Urals designed a new weapon, and it is dangerous to disregard it.

Rossiyskaya Gazeta publishes an exclusive material from Sofia, entitled "Vanga's will," which says that immediately after the death of the famous Bulgarian clairvoyant her numerous relatives started a squabble over her inheritance.

Izvestiya carries an article by Gennadiy Bocharov about the all-Russian strike of air traffic controllers, scheduled for August 27. The article is entitled "Will Russian airports close down on August 27?". The article cites the opinions of about all the participants in the conflict, showing the range of problems facing the air traffic control system.

"It is quite possible that the plane, which crashed into the sea near New York recently, was previously used by the President of Kazakhstan," an Izvestiya correspondent writes from Almaty. A Boeing of a special design, used by Nazarbayev since 1993, had a number of design defects, was extremely inconvenient to keep and inflicted huge losses. The Kazakh authorities urged the TWA air company, its previous owner, to buy it back. There are a number of details showing that it is the same plane, that flew from New York to Paris on July 17, and TWA was sure to know about its defects. If it is really so, the scandal over the July air crash will flare up again.

Komsomolskaya Pravda analyses a report published by Time about the preparation of the President's visit to Switzerland "for medical purposes." The newspaper carries a report of a lieutenant colonel of the Russian Interior Ministry troops, who spent about half a year in Chechen captivity.

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Russia: Yeltsin Endorses CIS Citizens' Service in Border Troops

LD2108142396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1354 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Aug 21 (Interfax) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Wednesday signed a law "On the ratification of the agreement between Russia and Tajikistan on the military service of Tajik citizens in Russian border guard troops on Tajik territory," Yeltsin's press service said.

Yeltsin also signed laws ratifying similar agreements on the service of Armenian and Kyrgyz citizens in Russian border guard troops stationed in these two CIS countries, the press service said.

Russia: Deputy Foreign Minister Leaves Moscow for Tbilisi

LD2208104796 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0951 GMT 22 Aug 96

[By Tatyana Selivanova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW August 22 (Itar-Tass) — Russian first Deputy Foreign Minister Boris Pastukhov and Ambassador At Large Oleg Mironov left for Georgia today, where they are going to hold talks on the Georgian-Abkhazian settlement. The solution of the problem of refugees will be one of the most important items on the agenda, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Demurin told Tass. With this in view, Pastukhov and Mironov intend to visit the Gali District of Abkhazia.

A spokesman for the Georgian embassy in Moscow confirmed in an interview with Tass that Ambassador Vazha Lordkipanidze had also flown to Tbilisi. He is going to attend a meeting of Pastukhov with commanders of the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Force and representatives of the Abkhazian side in the Gali District on Friday. On the next day they will hold talks with the Georgian leadership.

Itar-Tass reports from Tbilisi that the situation in the Gali District of Abkhazia dramatically deteriorated over the past several days. Georgian national TV reported that additional Abkhazian police units had been moved there. According to the information, received from the conflict zone, the struggle between several crime groups for spheres of influence is going on in the Gali District.

Russia: Moscow Seen To Have Bribed Air Crew's Way Out of Captivity

MK2108121596 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 20 Aug 96 p 4

[Report by Aleksandr Koretskiy: "A Well-Rehearsed Impromptu Move"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The long and tangled story of the escape of seven Russian pilots — the crew of an Il-76 aircraft operated by the "Aerostan" airline — is almost a ready plot for a gripping thriller. Although many significant aspects of the escape itself and the preparations for it are being carefully withheld by both Russian officials and the pilots themselves, certain details of the escape that KOMMERSANT-DAILY has learned make it possible to deduce the most likely picture of the goings-on involving the captive crew. But our conclusions are only a theory, attempting to explain the happy ending of this dramatically charged story.

It is small secret that since the very beginning of the saga of the Il-76 crew's captivity by the Talibs the Russian special services were ready to carry out a special operation to rescue the pilots by force. But political agencies, first of all, the Foreign Ministry, convinced the Kremlin that the conflict could be resolved through their channels. However, as early as December 1995 it became obvious that behind the Talibs' promises to release the crew members, who had been in captivity for the fifth month by that time, there was but a thinly veiled desire by the Talibs (and certain powers standing behind them) to turn the pilots into a lever of constant pressure on Russia with a view to removing it from efforts to resolve the tight knot of regional problems.

It was precisely then, in late 1995-early 1996, that threatening statements by some politicians and even diplomats emerged in the Russian press regarding the likelihood of using "other," quite undiplomatic methods of resolving the problems of rescuing the Russian pilots. According to KOMMERSANT-DAILY's information, at the time Moscow in fact started preparations for a commando operation — a number of corresponding subunits of certain special services were involved in designing a rescue plan. By some accounts, the bulk of the task force was to have been made up of commandos of the Main Intelligence Directorate [GRU] special-purpose units. But soon the mood of certain hopelessness regarding the Kandahar problem made room for a new flurry of Moscow's diplomatic activity. The plan for carrying out a commando operation was frozen. Yet, even if it had been 100-percent ready, there would have been no guarantee that it could be carried out without casualties, particularly among the captive crew members, who were always carefully guarded.

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A commando action was also unacceptable for another, purely diplomatic reason, because it would have amounted to a recognition, albeit indirect, of Talib charges that Moscow provides direct military assistance to the Rabbani regime. Finally, the third reason for rejecting the use of force to resolve the prisoners problem — which was probably the most significant one — was that the Kremlin cold not admit its own diplomatic impotence.

Consequently, the Foreign Ministry and the Foreign Intelligence Service [SVR] (each through its own channels) mounted an unprecedented tide of international pressure on the Talibs at the beginning of this year. Over the past several months they were urged to release the Russian pilots by the UN Security Council and the presidents and foreign ministers of a whole number of countries, including the United States. At the same time, against the backdrop of this campaign, a plan to pay ransom for the crew was being prepared together with a derivative from it, an operation to bribe the Talib chiefs who could at least collude in organizing their escape. Although, as the escaped pilots currently assert, they started devising an escape plan almost right after they were forced to land in Kandahar a year ago, it could become a reality only with outside assistance, and considerable assistance at that.

Such assistance (in fact all conceivable assistance under the circumstances) was not found wanting. First, the safest route and flight regime for Il-76 — through Iran to the United Arab Emirates, not through Pakistan to India, where the Talibs were actually looking for the aircraft — was chosen and agreed upon at the highest level. In the meantime, as soon as the plane took off from Kandahar, it was given the requisite flight documents — a permit number and a flight number to fly over the territories of Iran and the United Arab Emirates — without any delays and formalities through the Sharja office of the "Transavia" airline. It is quite possible that during a meeting of the crew members with a "Transavia" representative (he regularly brought them food and water) they were given the requisite information on the solely possible method of escaping an inevitable pursuit — to fly at an altitude of up to 100 meters and at a speed of up to 400 km/h with complete radio silence.

The only thing the crew could afford was to establish short-wave communications with Sharja, and that only in order to obtain flight documents. Surprisingly, the crew received an immediate response and flight data (which obviously must have been agreed upon with Tehran in advance) as soon as it went on the air. This calls into doubt the assertion by Deputy Prime Minister Vitaliy Ignatenko that the pilots' escape came as a complete surprise for Moscow.

Second, as one of the pilots said, the aircraft had everything that unarmed pilots needed to combat their armed guards, including ropes and heavy articles. It is unknown just who carefully prepared all this inventory. But, to all appearances, someone must have received a lot of money for nearly the entire string of lucky coincidences — the ropes, the fact that there were only three guards at the aircraft at the right moment, not six, as had always been the case before, and for the punctured wheel of the sole fighter jet at the Kandahar airport (or the absent pilot, according to another theory). All the more so because officials have admitted that Moscow was indeed ready to pay any sum to ransom the crew and that several million dollars were even transferred to a special account at an Abu-Dhabi-based bank, from which it would have been easier to dispose of it "depending on the situation." Although Ignatenko claims that the money returned home together with the crew, it is hardly credible that the money, unlike the crew, returned in full strength.

According to Vitaliy Ignatenko, many countries were involved in tackling the problem of the imprisoned pilots, but it is Pakistan, India, the United States, and Morocco that played a special role. The participation of U.S. Senator Hank Brown, who was the last to speak with the Talib-held crew members, in the effort to obtain the pilots' release is also hidden by a veil of secrecy. Crew commander Vladimir Sharpatov said that 10 days before their escape they asked Brown to assist in their release. The senator did assist them, as Sharpatov ambiguously put it — shortly afterward the crew was escorted to the airport. What happened next is well known.

Russia: Airline Denies Crashed Plane Carried Arms to Libya

LD2108135896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1345 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] YEKATERINBURG, Aug 21 (Interfax-Eurasia) — Yekaterinburg-based Spair company, whose Il-76 cargo plane crashed near Belgrade on August 19, has denied reports that the plane was carrying arms to Libya.

The plane en route from Yekaterinburg to Malta via Belgrade carried 15 tonnes of cargo, in particular 744 kilograms of pyrotechnical cartridges which are used as signaling devices in aviation, Vera Lagvinenko, Spair deputy director, said at a news conference in Yekaterinburg, the Urals, on Wednesday.

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There were 10 crew and an official of the Yugoslav company which had contracted the flight on board. Only eight bodies were found at the crash site.

The airline managers, who are awaiting the results of processing the flight records, believe that the crash occurred as a result of a total power failure. Lagvinenko ruled out the possibility of sabotage.

"The examination of the plane prior to take off in Yekaterinburg revealed no defects," she said.

Russia: No Information Yet on Crashed Plane's Cargo

MM2108111696 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 21 Aug 96 p 3

[Interview with Yuriy Yurkin, chief of Aeroflot's Belgrade office, by Stanislav Kucher; date and place not given; carried under the general heading "Nightmare in the Skies Over Belgrade"]

[FBIS Translated Text]

Should the Plane Not Have Taken Off?

We contacted Yuriy Yurkin, chief of Aeroflot's Belgrade office, a first-class pilot who flew various types of passenger airliner over 30 years.

[Yurkin] Yekaterinburg's Speyr airline has nothing to do with Aeroflot, so it is difficult for me to speak about, for instance, the technical condition of the plane before the flight. One thing I can safely say is that there was a whole range of factors that contributed to the crash. Unquestionably, the plane took off in appalling weather conditions of the kind in which taking off is generally contraindicated. That should be the starting point for the analysis. As to why the electronic instruments on board failed after take-off, the navigation instruments cut out, and contact with the pilot was lost, all this needs to be clarified by the special commission that has flown to Belgrade.

[Kucher] Does it include representatives of Speyr?

[Yurkin] Speyr General Director V. Spurnov has flown in separately. Of course he will take part in the investigation.

[Kucher] Is there any confirmation of the presence on board the plane of arms, allegedly destined for Libya?

[Yurkin] Only the Yekaterinburg people know what was on board. The Serbian commission now at work has not provided us with this information.

[Kucher] Judging by the first reports from Belgrade, the Serbs are not sharing their information with anyone.

[Yurkin] Well, why should they? They are not letting the press near them for the time being — and they are right not to do so. Russia's official representatives are getting the necessary information without any special problems. However, I repeat, the situation will be clarified only after the results of the joint work of our Russian and Serbian commissions become known.

Russia: 'Sweeping Cooperation' in Space Flights Planned With China

LD2108134896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1330 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Aug 21 (Interfax) -- Russia and China are planning to launch sweeping cooperation in manned space flights, head of a visiting Chinese delegation Shen Jueqiun said Wednesday [21 August].

Speaking after talks at Khrunichev space center, GKNPZ, he described the current visit by a 50-strong Chinese team to Russia as a fact-finding mission. The delegation has visited several space-related facilities, including Energia missile-space corporation outside Moscow.

Shen said that unlike China, Russia had a rich experience in the area of manned flights and Beijing wanted to promote longer range cooperation with Russia in areas such as expertise of various space projects and acquisition of related equipment and programs for a variety of tests.

First deputy GKNPZ general director Aleksandr Medvedev, in turn, said China was Russia's close neighbor and that the Russian space center was ready to promote long range cooperation with its Chinese counterparts in the development of boosters, spacecraft and orbiting stations.

GKNPZ is the developer and producer of the Proton booster, Russia's main vehicle of delivery of orbiting stations and scientific modules into outer space. International Launch Services (ILS), an Russian-American venture, has been handling all commercial contracts on Proton boosters since 1993. It includes Russian GKNPZ and Energia and Lockheed-Martin of the United States.

ILS has signed more than $1 billion worth of contracts for launching commercial satellites until 1999.

Russia: Sudan Sanctions Trouble Russian Interests

MM2208093696 Moscow PRAVDA PYAT in Russian 22 Aug 96 p 3

[Article by Anton Surikov, director of the Institute of Defense Studies Information-Analysis Center, under

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the "Mysterious Diplomacy" rubric: "UN Economic Sanctions Against...Russia?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The question of toughening sanctions against the Republic of Sudan is currently being discussed in the UN Security Council. What is going on here? Especially since few people in Russia know what is actually happening in that distant African state.

The prehistory of today's events commenced 26 June 1995. On that day an attempt was made on the life of Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, which neighbors on Sudan. He had gone there to participate in a routine summit of the OAU countries. Mubarak survived. An investigation was launched, and soon it was announced that the terrorists' tracks led to Khartoum, the capital of Sudan.

Admittedly, no convincing evidence at all of the Sudanese authorities' complicity in the terrorist act was produced. Moreover, the authorities in Khartoum cooperated actively with the OAU in seeking the criminals. The Sudanese ambassador to Moscow says that the republic's general prosecutor has long been devoting most of his work time to tackling precisely this question. According to the ambassador, his country does not support international terrorism. It is open to any forms of international cooperation in the struggle against this evil. An example of such cooperation was provided by the recent joint Sudanese-French operation to capture the well-known terrorist Carlos in Khartoum and his subsequent extradition to French justice.

But the complete lack of any juridical proof of the Khartoum authorities' complicity in the assassination attempt in Addis Ababa certainly did not embarrass the United States, which has long had it in for the Sudanese regime for refusing to follow Washington's policy and has even proclaimed it a terrorist regime. Having enlisted the support of Egypt and certain other pro-U.S. regimes in the Arab world, the United States secured the inclusion of the "Sudanese question" on the UN Security Council's agenda. As a result, a note censuring the Khartoum authorities was adopted. The Russian representative on the Security Council abstained in the vote.

Today it is a question no longer of simply censuring Sudan but of imposing considerably more serious sanctions of an economic nature. In particular, it is proposed to cancel international flights and virtually impose an air blockade of the country. But the most interesting thing is that the sanctions, if introduced, will hit hard not only at Sudan but also at Russia. Yes, this is precisely how the question stands. For it was announced quite recently that two very profitable long-term contracts had been virtually agreed between the Sudanese and us. One of them, worth more than $1 billion, proposes the construction of an 1,800-km long pipeline, an oil refinery in Khartoum, and a terminal on the Red Sea. The second contract provides for the construction of a series of hydroelectric power stations on the Nile. It would be superfluous to say that the implementation of these contracts, which are capable of creating several hundred thousand additional jobs in our country, would be highly opportune for us. Particularly with regard to the prospect of the further development of economic ties with Sudan, whose confirmed oil reserves alone amount to more than 19 billion barrels. By the way, a memorandum was signed back in 1995 between Moscow and Khartoum on cooperation in the sphere of oil extraction in Southern Sudan and the exploitation of deposits of rare metals on the Red Sea coast.

Now the Americans are requiring us virtually to bury with our own hands the business cooperation that has only just begun. At the same time, for this they do not even demand that we formally vote for the UN draft resolution being submitted on the question of sanctions. The most important thing to the United States is that Russia should not exercise its right of veto during the vote. Finally, I must mention the general U.S. line on the question of international sanctions against particular countries. The following trend is obvious here: As soon as long-term projects in the sphere of economic cooperation between Russia and other countries are planned, it at once turns out that these countries have in some way sinned against the world community. Now they "sponsor international terrorism," now they "secretly develop nuclear weapons," now something else. This was the case in the past with Iraq, Serbia, Libya, and the DPRK. It is happening now with Libya again, with Iran, Cuba, and Sudan. It is time to take a sober look at things and realize that all the U.S. accusations against so-called rogue states are totally groundless and nothing but an attempt to undermine the economic interests of third countries, including Russia.

P.S. The sad forecasts have come true. The UN Security Council has approved the resolution introducing new sanctions against Sudan. Russia did not exercise its right of veto....

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Political Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Returns to Moscow, Starts Work 22 Aug

LD2208060496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0559 GMT 22 Aug 96

[By Artem Protasenko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW August 22 (Itar-Tass) — President Boris Yeltsin returned from a two-day trip to the lakeland of Valday, north-west of Moscow, late on Wednesday and is expected to work in the Kremlin today, presidential spokesman Sergey Yastrzhembskiy told Tass on Thursday.

"Today Boris Yeltsin will spend his working day in the Kremlin", he said adding that the president would work with documents and meet the candidates to the vacant posts in the government.

Yastrzhembskiy said that from Valday Yeltsin went to his countryside residence outside Moscow.

Russia: Locals, Security Men Confirm Yeltsin's Stay in Valday

MK2208110896 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 22 Aug 96 p 1

[Report from Novgorod by Tatyana Shchipanova: "Boris Yeltsin Is Returning to the Kremlin. Officials Confirm That the President Was in Valday"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Today, Boris Yeltsin will probably appear in the Kremlin, although yesterday evening there was still no official information on that account. In the meantime, according to reports from confidential sources, not only was the president not hospitalized, but he feels considerably refreshed after his brief vacation. Boris Yeltsin has undergone no heart surgery, the need for which appears to have been universally recognized despite official refutations, and it is unclear whether or not it will take place at all.

Furthermore, there is consolatory news for nervous Russian citizens and Western journalists about the president's whereabouts during the days when many people had doubts about the state of his health. Konstantin Gorin, chief of the Valday branch of the Federal Protection Service of Russia, has told your SEGODNYA correspondent that Boris Yeltsin did arrive in Valday on Monday afternoon with a view to staying there for two days. Ordinary Valday residents living close to the sanatorium have also confirmed that the president did visit them. Therefore, if this information is also called into question, one would have to admit the existence of a sophisticated conspiracy aimed at confusing the whole world as to the whereabouts of the head of the Russian Federation. Unfortunately, the quality of presidential information makes it impossible to rule out even this.

Certain details regarding Yeltsin's vacation site have seeped in. The country house in which the president stayed was built in the early 1980's "under Brezhnev." Construction was finished in 1982, so Leonid Ilich [Brezhnev] could not use it. The first visitor to stay there was Viktor Grishin, the then first secretary of the Moscow City Committee of the CPSU. Apart from him, celebrities who vacationed in the house located on the picturesque shore of Uzhin Lake included Nikolay Ryzhkov, Aleksandr Yakovlev, Anatoliy Lukyanov, Viktor Yerin, Viktor Chernomyrdin, Vladimir Shumeyko, Gavriil Popov, Yegor Gaydar, Nikolay Tikhonov, and even Mongolian leader Tsedenbal. Interestingly, Anatoliy Lukyanov was summoned to Moscow after the putsch in August 1991 from the very same Valday country house.

The presidential residence is a two-story house that has everything necessary for a good rest and work. According to Mr. Gorin, everything is "very modest and without excesses." By the way, it was Boris Yeltsin's fifth vacation in Valday. It only remains to be added that the weather in Novgorod Oblast is just gorgeous, and that the bear hunting season opened there last Saturday.

Russia: Cardiology Director Denies Yeltsin Taken to Hospital

LD2108122596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1215 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Aug 21 (Interfax) — Yuriy Belenkov, director of the clinical cardiology institute of the Russian cardiology complex formerly known as Yevgeniy Chazov's hospital: the USSR Cardiological Center, has denied media reports that Russian President Boris Yeltsin was taken to the cardiology complex.

Belenkov told Interfax in an exclusive interview that had the president received medical care in the clinical cardiology institute he would certainly have known and would not have planned a trip abroad in the next few days. Belenkov invited an Interfax correspondent to the cardiology complex.

"We have very few patients in the summer, and we will certainly have time to consider problems regarding the development of Russian cardiology," he said.

Chazov's office told Interfax that the cardiology complex's director general was currently outside Moscow but declined to say whether he was on vacation or on a business trip.

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Chazov and his deputy Belenkov are to travel to Birmingham, Britain, on August 24 to take part in the European Congress of Cardiologists during a week, Chazov's office said.

The management of the medical center under the presidential affairs department could not be reached. Middle management representatives declined to confirm or deny media reports that Yeltsin had an aortocoronary shunting operation.

Russian Deputy Health Care Minister Aleksey Moskvichyov was clearly bewildered by Interfax's question regarding Yeltsin's alleged hospitalization. He said he was unaware of the president's hospitalization although he should be aware of such events.

"I consider the rumors about the Russian president's health problems blown up by the media during the last few days to be groundless," Moskvichyov said.

Russia: Tarpishchev: Yeltsin To Be Back on Tennis Courts in '2-3 Months'

MM2108180796 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 22 Aug 96 p 7

[Unattributed roundup of press and radio reports: "Persistent Rumors"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted contains reprint of TIME magazine article claiming to have a "Kremlin bulletin" which attests to Yeltsin's ill health; a report on Yeltsin's health from Ekho Moskvy radio's Aleksandr Plyushchev citing "well-informed sources;" and a report from Radio Liberty which claims that the "diplomatic efforts of his press service, staff, and some top officials in the government are clearly not salvaging the situation"]

The "Bolshaya Shlyapa" ["Top Hat" tennis tournament] Is Expecting Him

Aleksandr Korzhakov's participation in last Sunday's elite Bolshaya Shlyapa tennis tournament caused observers to talk about the former presidential chief bodyguard's possible return to big-time politics. Gagik Karapetyan:

"An unescorted Zhiguli car was one of the first to appear at the Luzhniki tennis courts early in the morning. General Korzhakov was sitting at the wheel with former Russian Sports Minister Shamil Tarpishchev sitting alongside — the doubles version of this tennis tournament was traditionally held under his patronage.

"It was interesting to watch the match between Deputy Sports Minister Viktor Khotochkin and Leonid Tyagachev, chief coach of the country's alpine skiing team, whose names have been mentioned among Tarpishchev's possible successors. But in the final round the former leader of the Main Protection Directorate, whose return to the country's political arena has been confidently predicted by many participants in this elite tennis tournament, gained the upper hand by dint of persistent effort.

"In conversation with me Tarpishchev himself expressed the hope that in two to three months the country's president will return to the courts of the Kremlin tennis club once he has rested after the election and the inauguration. The president's chief coach does not know yet who Boris Yeltsin's partner will be but very much hopes to keep his old job as leader of the president's coordinating committee on physical culture and sports. [passage omitted contains Radio France International commentary citing the Paris press on Yeltsin's health as a "political issue" in light of the latest Chechnya crisis.]

Russia: Press Service Fuels Suspicions About Yeltsin's Health

MK2108115296 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 21 Aug 96 pp 1, 3

[Report by Natalya Kalashnikova and Aleksandr Koretskiy: "He Is Somewhere Over There" — article includes map of the Valday Hills, which President Yeltsin has reportedly been visiting]

[FBIS Translated Text] "In connection with yet more of the guesses and suggestions that have been emerging over the whereabouts of the president of the Russian Federation, I would like to state this: Boris Nikolayevich has gone to Valday for two days in order to take a look at whether or not it is possible to spend his regular vacation there. The president, together with Chairman of the Government Chernomyrdin, continues to attend directly to the process of forming the Cabinet of Ministers. Yeltsin is expected to return to Moscow this week in order to hold a number of meetings with government members." This statement was made by the presidential press secretary yesterday morning.

The phrasing of this statement looked somewhat strange — though this could be attributed to the new presidential secretary's unusual "handwriting" — for it turns out that had it not been for "yet more guesses and suggestions" there would have been no information about the president's departure from Moscow. A two-day visit "in order to take a look at whether or not it is possible to spend his vacation" there is also somewhat odd — even the press service made no bones about the fact that the electoral marathon had exhausted Yeltsin. Your KOMMERSANT-DAILY correspondent turned for comment to the presidential press service. Alas, they could not add anything to the text of the official report.

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Furthermore, numerous telephone calls to Kremlin offices enabled KOMMERSANT-DAILY to suggest that their inhabitants were scarcely aware of exactly when the president left Moscow.

Expecting that the administration of Novgorod Oblast must be well informed of Yeltsin's visit, KOMMERSANT-DAILY contacted the oblast administration's press service. They responded with regret that they cannot comment on media reports about the president's arrival in the oblast in any way because the oblast administration leadership learned about it from the same media reports. Representatives of the press service suggested, however, that the president could have gone, as usual, to take a rest at one of the federally run sanatoriums, while, as a rule, the oblast leadership is not involved in the preparations for such visits. It should be noted, however, that according to a long-standing procedure, formerly the head of oblast administration was always notified of the arrival of such a ranking guest. At the same time — also as a rule — the local leadership did not miss the opportunity to welcome the dear guest in person. Maybe someone did not want such a welcome to take place this time?

Your KOMMERSANT-DAILY correspondent expressed his bewilderment in that regard in a telephone conversation with a high-ranking official. The official hinted that "you called the wrong place" (the wrong people in Novgorod Oblast) and added trustingly that literally a quarter of an hour ago he had spoken with the president's wife, who is at Valday. Yet, the official did not disclose any other details.

Meanwhile, back on Monday information started coming in from various sources that the president is neither at Barvikha nor at the Kremlin. At the same time, by purely outward indications, the impression was that all government clinics and hospitals, including the Central Clinical Hospital and the Cardiological Center, operated as usual. Yet, journalists of the "Ekho Moskvy" radio station shared with KOMMERSANT-DAILY their information that at 0800 yesterday morning they saw the motorcade of the Russian premier (it is hard to say whether Chernomyrdin himself was in one of the limousines) leaving the Russian Cardiological Production Scientific Center of the Russian Health Ministry headed by Academician Yevgeniy Chazov. In the meantime, rumors were circulating around Moscow to the effect that the president had been treated at the Cardiological Center (3d Cherepkovskaya St, 15a, where one of its branches is located) since 15 August. Furthermore, some sources, quoted by "Ekho Moskvy," said that the president was operated on right after he was taken to the Cardiological Center; that is, on 15-16 August, and that currently he is going through a rehabilitation period.

Other, equally informed sources give a different account: On 15 August a conference of specialist doctors was held at the Cardiological Center to discuss the possibility of conducting an operation; the doctors assessed the president's condition as "moderately serious" and decided to postpone the operation for some time. A second conference that was to have passed the final verdict on the operation was allegedly scheduled for yesterday. Moreover, according to KOMMERSANT-DAILY's information, the possibility of resorting to the services of foreign doctors (in particular, as was mentioned by an article in TIME, and which was refuted by the presidential press service) was nevertheless discussed in the medical circles treating the president. After all, medical treatment abroad is a normal practice to which many foreign politicians resort if necessary.

It should be recalled that at the beginning of last week the presidential press service backed away from its previous assertions that Yeltsin would go on vacation as early as Monday; the new theory had it that he would work in Moscow until the end of this week and only then would he decide where to go on vacation and for how long. In the middle of the week the same press service said that Yeltsin continues to work and at the same time "he is undergoing a routine medical pre-vacation checkup."

Notably, yesterday evening Sergey Yastrzhembskiy categorically refuted reports about Boris Yeltsin's hospitalization, including rumors that he was taken to the Cardiological Center and that the question of an operation was mulled over during the day. Furthermore, Grigoriy Domba, acting chief doctor of the Cardiological Center, suggested that distrustful journalists see for themselves that Yeltsin was not at the Cardiological Center. Press Secretary Yastrzhembskiy reaffirmed that the president was at Valday.

Passions over Boris Yeltsin's health have been running high in Moscow for the second day now. It is for the second day that the presidential press service is fighting off persistent journalists with unconvincing comments. And the less convincing they become, the more persistent the journalists will become in their independent inquiries.

Russia: Kremlin Credibility Hurt by Clashing Reports on Yeltsin

MK2108131096 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 21 Aug 96 p 1

[Report by Dmitriy Volkov: "The Stanislavskiy Principle"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The fits of panic over the president's state of health, which has concerned the

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Russian public and Western politicians for several years now, have been increasing. In the past few days Boris Yeltsin's press service twice — on Monday and yesterday [Tuesday] — had to issue refutations: In the first instance concerning reports that the president is to undergo a heart operation in Switzerland; in the second, that since last week he has been preparing for an operation at Yevgeniy Chazov's clinic in Moscow.

Yesterday the president's press service found itself in a strange situation. Something forced it to say that Mr. Yeltsin had gone to Valday for two days "to see whether he could spend his vacation there." Such fastidiousness by the head of state with respect to places rightfully considered nature preserves, which were earlier used for vacationing by, for instance, USSR Supreme Soviet Chairman Anatoliy Lukyanov, is hard to explain. Later the press service provided the worried journalists with additional details about a resort area in the upper part of the Volga River and about the length of a helicopter flight there from Moscow (450 km, 2 hours and 20 minutes). According to presidential Press Secretary Sergey Yastrzhembskiy "this is one of the best climatic resort areas in Russia's moderate latitudes, known for its pure air and mild temperature conditions, which in doctors' opinion creates ideal conditions for Boris Yeltsin to restore his forces after a long and strained election campaign."

By that time, however, unconfirmed reports had spread that Boris Yeltsin was in the Chazov clinic — apparently before or maybe after a heart bypass operation.... Some analysts began to mull over whether Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin's meeting with heads of the power structures Tuesday evening was not, in effect, part of that operation. The press service had to issue a separate refutation, Mr. Yastrzhembskiy describing the media reports as "utter nonsense," noting that the president had gone to Valday not the day before but earlier, and saying that he was just about to return to Moscow.

Meanwhile the president's press service and that of Security Council Secretary Aleksandr Lebed continued to exchange opinions. The latter doubted that Boris Yeltsin "has taken a personal part" in working on the text of his latest assignments to Gen. Lebed, the "editing" of which it assessed as "hasty and incompetent," stressing that "nobody is allowed to manipulate the president's name," with the former responding that the president's instructions are not subject to coordination.

Rumors about Boris Yeltsin's health may, of course, be offensive to himself and his family, but the acute hunger of journalists, who hate to miss even the slightest indication of the president's physical condition, comes not of malice but of the grand role that is played by the Russian leader. This role is, in effect, not limited by anything except health.

Let us enumerate all the basic theories that have to be enumerated by an outside observer monitoring media reports and conflicting information by state agencies. The first theory: Mr. Lebed's press service is not right; the president personally issued the instructions to the general, and even if he is not right, at least he is not zombified. Reports of hospitalization are "utter nonsense," while Boris Yeltsin is in Valday. The second theory: The press service of the Security Council warns society about a creeping coup; Boris Yeltsin is in a hospital, while Kremlin officials do not want to admit to this. The third theory is reminiscent of the beginning of the Chechen war, when the president developed a problem with his nasal septum and opportunely disappeared from the public eye. Within the next few hours, the federal command's ultimatum to the Chechen separatists runs out, after which, under this theory, artillery fire can be used against Groznyy to destroy any traces of the rebuilding of Chechnya's national-economic complex, and with it, those of the corresponding budget appropriations. Naturally, under this theory, the guarantor of the Constitution does not want to be too close to the public.

It needs to be recognized that the available information leaves no other choice but the first theory — on the mere grounds that it is official and therefore, like [Karl] Marx's theory, correct. It is known, however, that many people will — even without sufficient grounds — embrace the other two, ardently discussing their implications. Clearly, what can be mildly put as lack of coordination between Security Council Secretary Aleksandr Lebed and its chairman, Boris Yeltsin, will play into these people's hands.

In spite of its growing professionalism, the presidential press service will hardly be able to overcome the absence of trust in the official handouts from the Kremlin. The authorities' contradictory actions, the long-standing speculation about the president's illnesses, and his actual heart problems, which manifested themselves last year, outweigh any assurances and protestations by Mr. Yastrzhembskiy. Nobody is to blame here. The Stanislavskiy principle.... [This refers to a phrase used frequently by this renowned stage director. When viewing actors perform he would often say, "I don't believe it."]

Yet it would be very easy to stop these rumors: As, for instance, Anatoliy Lukyanov did five years and three days ago, by boarding a helicopter and getting back to Moscow to resolve the crisis.

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True, at the time Mr. Lukyanov lost power, and now has to direct the Communists in the State Duma instead of doing this on a nationwide scale. Possibly this is keeping our president from a hasty reaction to the rumors and the expression of discontent on the part of his subordinates: As long as he is in power, nothing really matters....

Russia: Yeltsin Hails Russians on August Victory Anniversary

LD2208081296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0747 GMT 22 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Aug 22 (Interfax) — President Boris Yeltsin has congratulated the people of Russia on the fifth anniversary of victory won by the democratic forces in 1991, and on the occasion of Russian Flag Day marked on August 22.

"The destiny of democracy, the destiny of Russia" was at stake on August 19-22, when members of the State of Emergency Committee attempted to stage a coup d'etat, the president said in his message.

Though not all our plans have been carried out — "the life of many Russians remains hard, the process of economic reforms proceeds with difficulty, the crisis in Chechnya claiming the lives of our countrymen is like a bleeding wound on Russia's body, and the life of our compatriots in CIS states is tough," — the hardest times are in the past, Yeltsin said.

Russian statehood has strengthened, democracy, which passed through a major stage in its development with the recent presidential elections, has consolidated, inflation has been overcome, and a turn for the better in endeavors to ensure social security is in evidence, Yeltsin pointed out.

"All this shows that what we fought for in August of 1991, what Russia's first heroes Vladimir Usov, Dmitriy Komar and Ilya Krichevskiy died for, is building its way in our country confidently, though not without difficulty," the president said in his message. He wished the defenders of Free Russia good health, prosperity and happiness.

Russia: Yeltsin Signs Law on Amendments to 1996 Budget

LD2108142896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1357 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Aug 21 (Interfax) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a bill on amendments to the federal law on the 1996 federal budget Wednesday. The bill was passed by the State Duma on July 19 and approved by the Federation Council on August 7, the presidential press office told Interfax.

Russia: Yeltsin Shown Meeting New Minister; Looks 'Well,' 'Laughing'

LD2208103396 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1000 GMT 22 Aug 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Boris Yeltsin met Health Minister Tatyana Dmitriyeva. She is the only woman minister in the new government. [video shows a smiling Yeltsin chatting with the new minister; Yeltsin is sitting at a desk with the Russian flag behind him; Yeltsin looks well and is laughing; Dmitriyeva is seen in close-up but Yeltsin is not]

Russia: Yeltsin Confers With Candidates for Vacant Posts

LD2208095496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0932 GMT 22 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Aug 22 (Interfax) — President Boris Yeltsin conferred with candidates for the vacant posts in Russia's new government in the Kremlin on Thursday, a source in his press service told Interfax.

The president received Anatoliy Zaytsev, candidate for the post of minister of railroads; Yuriy Bespalov, candidate for the post of industry minister; Viktor Orlov, candidate for the post of minister of natural resources; Petr Rodionov, candidate for the post of fuel and energy minister; Tatyana Dmitriyeva, candidate for the post of health minister.

A well-informed source in the Kremlin told Interfax that Yeltsin approved these candidacies and decrees on appointing new cabinet ministers are expected to be signed shortly.

Russia: Yeltsin Fills Further Vacancies in Cabinet

LD2208092896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0920 GMT 22 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Aug 22 (Interfax) — President Boris Yeltsin signed decrees to fill vacancies in Russia's new Cabinet of Ministers, leader of the government's press service Valeriy Grishin told Interfax.

Under the decrees Anatoliy Zaytsev is appointed as Minister of Railroads, Yuriy Bespalov as Minister of Industries, Viktor Orlov as Minister of Natural Resources, Petr Rodionov as Minister of Fuel and Energy, Tatyana Dmitriyeva as Health Minister.

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Earlier the president conferred with them in the Kremlin.

Russia: Tuleyev Appointed Minister for CIS Cooperation

LD2208104496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1024 GMT 22 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Aug 22 (Interfax) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has ordered new government appointments to fill the remaining vacant posts in the new cabinet, senior government spokesman Valeriy Grishin told Interfax on Thursday.

Anatoliy Zaytsev takes charge of the railway ministry and Yuriy Bespalov of the industry ministry. Viktor Orlov and Petr Rodionov become new heads of the ministries for natural resources and energy respectively while Tatyana Dmitriyeva will lead the health ministry.

All five met Yeltsin in the Kremlin earlier in the day.

Grishin also announced that parliament speaker of Kemerovo region Amangeldiy Tuleyev was appointed as minister for CIS cooperation.

Russia: Yeltsin, Chernomyrdin Discuss Ministerial Appointments

LD2108202296 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1900 GMT 21 Aug 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] The president of Russia and the head of the government had a telephone conversation today. As RIA-Novosti was told by a source close to the prime minister, they discussed the appointment of seven federal ministers to vacant posts. [Video showed still photographs of Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin]

Russia: Chernomyrdin Outlines Tasks for New Cabinet

LD2208094496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0835 GMT 22 Aug 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Oleg Velichko]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 22 Aug (ITAR-TASS)— Appointments will be made today for the remaining vacant ministerial posts. Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said this today, opening the first session of the new government. "And so the process of forming the cabinet of ministers is virtually completed," he noted.

Chernomyrdin, referring to today's talks with Boris Yeltsin, congratulated on the president's behalf the members of the government on starting their work. At the same time, he gave an assurance that the government would operate "as a team, and in a precise, discipline, coordinated, professional, and that means effective way." "The potential and experience of each member of the government is sufficiently high that I can be confident in saying that the new government will cope with the tasks entrusted to it," he stressed.

Chernomyrdin believes that the government must considerably activate its work beginning from the first day of its work. He has said there is a substantial basis for this: On the whole, a solid legislative basis of law and enactments has been established concerning the most important directions of the reform; economic restructuring is beginning to take place and the ruble has become a real currency; it has become possible to achieve a visible decline in the growth of prices; a large private sector, which produces almost 70 percent of the gross domestic product, has been created in the economy; the decline of the population's living standards has been practically stopped; and a stable positive balance is being maintained in foreign trade.

Chernomyrdin thinks the fact is important that the new cabinet is setting about its activity in the stable political situation that has taken shape in Russia since the presidential elections. At the same time, he admitted that the country's economic situation still remains a complicated one. The outcome of the past months of this year, the prime minister noted, is several tightly bound-up knots of problems that need to be unravelled immediately. This applies to the execution of the budget and its debts, the critical situation in the income-linked part of it, nonpayments, the chaotic state of the payments, the growing practice of barter in the economy, a deterioration in the structure of the monetary mass on account of the growth of every possible kind of surrogate, continuing industrial decline, as well as a slowing down of the work on setting up and improving market institutions. "If we do not move forward, we will not unravel all these knots in the months of the year that remain, and then the beginning of an economic revival in 1997 will not be realistic," the prime minister stressed.

Chernomyrdin said that for the first time the draft budget for 1997 was designed for an economy functioning in conditions of low inflation. "It is an historic milestone in itself," he said. "However, the complexity of tasks is of a higher order too."

According to the prime minister, there are bound to be amendments of economic policies because they are dictated by life. He stressed especially that there are three principal points here: acceleration of reforms, strict observance of their inner logic by the government, and an increased "technological mode" of our work.

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Chernomyrdin noted that financial stabilization with a special thrust on the strict implementation of the budget will be continued in economic policies. At the same time, he specified, all the parameters of the draft budget for the following year will be fine-tuned and tested for feasibility — specifically, there will be reforms in the social sector, the agrarian sphere, provisions for the Armed Forces and the defense complex, increased state support for law enforcement, and the implementation of sensible industrial policy.

Russia: Yeltsin's Disputed Chechnya Instructions to Lebed Viewed

MK2108130796 Moscow MOSKOVSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 21 Aug 96 p 1

[Article by Oleg Zhirnov: "To Step Up War.... and Stop It?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Understood literally, the president's latest instructions to A. Lebed would mean that the general-Security Council secretary is being urged to make an "about-face." First, to clear Groznyy of rebel fighters and soon after let them have both the city and all of Chechnya. One of the points in the presidential instructions says this: to restore the law and order system in Groznyy that existed on 5 August; that is to say, before the storming and capture of the Chechen capital. Another point provides this reminder: to complete by 1 September the phased withdrawal of Russian joint forces in Chechnya.

I would like to believe that this is not just another case of setting up Lebed or not simply a slip-up. [I would like to believe] that the authors of the instruction did not have in mind senseless bloodshed at the end of a military campaign they themselves arranged, but that, for example, they were placing hope in some of the diplomatic abilities of the selfsame A. Lebed; that is, in his unspoiled relations with the separatist leaders. In agreeing to carry out such a controversial instruction, the Security Council secretary could simply try to agree with the separatist leaders that they should leave temporarily some areas in Groznyy.

This guess has been confirmed by the authoritative opinion of General Rokhlin, the State Duma defense committee chairman, whom your MOSKOVSKAYA PRAVDA observer asked to comment on some of the points of the president's instructions. In principle he does not rule out that it is technically feasible to retake Groznyy by military means: "If we were able to do it during the hardest period when the Dudayevites had absolute sway, we can perhaps do it a second time. This is feasible. The question is how professionally we can do it and what losses it would entail for us."

To the direct question: Does this mean a new storming of Groznyy by Russian troops? Rokhlin said: "I would not like to think that this is exactly what is implied. There is the second part of the instruction about the withdrawal of the troops, and perhaps it is simpler to agree with the Chechens that they vacate the city. We are ready to withdraw the troops, but be so good as to vacate Groznyy. And, I would also like to believe that this second option should be taken, so as to avoid more senseless victims involved in the retaking of Groznyy in order to surrender soon after."

In the meantime, General Pulikovskiy, commander of the Russian troops in Chechnya, has asked the population of Groznyy to leave the city within 48 hours. He is clearly preparing for nothing else but a storm, stating that, after this deadline, he reserves the right to employ heavy artillery, ground-attack aviation, and multiple rocket launchers. There was a simultaneous report on talks with Maskhadov by A. Lebed's representative, rather than by Pulikovskiy.

Is this a coordinated tactic of forcing out the rebel fighters from the Chechen capital they captured, thus combining military pressure with talks? Or is this once again the opposing actions of the different departments that have until recently invariably led Russia to defeat in Chechnya? By what are the Russian troops guided in preparation for the onslaught? By some instruction from A. Lebed, who is known to aim at the opposite — at "stopping the fight?" By the president's instruction bypassing the Security Council secretary? Or maybe the troops are acting as they think fit?

It is rather probable that the president's instructions to A. Lebed — formulated so as work both sides of the street — have been taken as a guide to action and given them a free hand: Complete the war by 1 September, but step it up at first.... Unfortunately, this instruction points to no clear reference point; that is, to an option between two ways of solving the Chechen problem.

Russia: Pulikovskiy 'Exceeded His Powers' With Groznyy Ultimatum

LD2208074796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0740 GMT 22 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Aug 22 (Interfax) — The Russian Defense Ministry neither authored nor approved Lt. Gen. Konstantin Pulikovskiy's ultimatum to the residents of Groznyy, Defense Minister Col. Gen. Igor Rodionov said.

Deputy federal troops commander Lt. Gen. Pulikovskiy ordered local residents to leave Groznyy by August 22 and planned large-scale all-arms action against the separatists.

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"Pulikovskiy exceeded his powers and made a serious mistake by issuing the ultimatum," Rodionov said in a statement handed over to the Interfax news agency Thursday. "No army commander, even that highly positioned, may come out with this kind of statement," Rodionov said.

In Rodionov's view, "the armed forces, as well as the other power structures, pursue no independent policies and are nothing but an instrument for the realization of government policies."

Rodionov suggested that the statesmen and political leaders come out with a formula for a Chechen settlement and issue the most unambiguous and clear-cut orders to the federal troops contingent in Chechnya.

Only the skillful combination of purely political and military methods will yield a solution to the most complicated Chechen problem, Rodionov said.

Rodionov returned Wednesday evening from the city of Volgograd where he attended a conference of senior commanders of the North Caucasian Military District.

Russia: Interior Ministry Issues Statement on Extent of Powers

LD2108181196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1801 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Aug 21 (Interfax) — The Russian interior minister has no authority over security services, headquarters or units other than those of the Interior Ministry, the ministry's press office said Wednesday, commenting on the ultimatum put forth by deputy federal commander in Chechnya Konstantin Pulikovskiy.

The Russian Interior Ministry acts in Chechnya strictly in accordance with decrees of the Russian president, according to a statement by the press office sent to Interfax.

"A Russian presidential decree of December 25, 1995, grants the command over the provisional forces disarming all rebel units to Deputy Commander of the North Caucasian military district Lt. Gen. Vyacheslav Tikhomirov," the statement reads.

According to the document, the Russian interior minister is charged with organizing work to ensure citizens' security, rights and freedoms, law enforcement, fight against crime and disarmament of all rebel units on Chechen territory. These tasks are defined by Russian laws and Interior Ministry regulations, the statement reads.

Russia: Leadership Silence on Ultimatum Shows 'Paralysis of Power'

MM2108140896 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 22 Aug 96 p 1

[Unattributed "IZVESTIYA Viewpoint" article: "Paralysis of Power"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The events of recent days attest that the Chechen crisis is demonstrating to the world the paralysis of Russian power.

General Pulikovskiy's ultimatum and his intention to pacify Groznyy "using bomber and ground-attack aircraft, and also multiple-launch rocket systems and artillery," did not receive an instantaneous and clear assessment from the top Russian leadership. As of the time this issue of IZVESTIYA is going to press, nothing is being done to stop the tragedy. Society, which is already accustomed now to seeing reports from Chechnya as ordinary current events, is seemingly deliberately being given the idea that further loss of life and further bloodshed are necessary and justified.

So far no institution of Russian power has put forward any alternative to the general's insane plan. According to the official story, the president is choosing a vacation spot in Valday, but, according to information from other sources, he is undergoing examination at a cardiological center. The premier is preparing for the first session of the government. The presidential chief of staff is in Denmark. The Duma is in recess. The defense minister is attending the consecration of churches.

The inaction of organs of power and top officials is giving "power" structures a totally free hand. The absence for almost 48 hours of any reaction on the part of the Russian leadership to General Pulikovskiy's ultimatum can mean one of two things: Either the military are trying to fulfill the president's impossible order and restore law and order in Chechnya to the status as of 5 August, or else the military are out of control [vyshli iz podchineniya]. But both of the above indicate that power is paralyzed. It cannot protect peaceful residents of Groznyy from bombardment and bombing raids, the country and society from yet another disgrace, and itself from being discredited by its own impotence and inability to control and answer for everything that is happening in Russia.

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Military Issues

Russia: Yeltsin's Missile Technology Export Controls Edict Reported

MM2208090796 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 22 Aug 96 p 1

[Unattributed "President" column report: "Export of Dual Technologies Under Control"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian President Boris Yeltsin has issued an edict "On Monitoring the Export From the Russian Federation of Equipment, Materials, and Technologies Used in the Creation of Missile Weapons."

The president has approved the list of equipment, materials, and technologies used in the creation of missile weapons which are subject to export control. Any deliveries of this nature can be carried out only on the decision of the Russian Federation Government and after the relevant expert studies have been carried out. This list can be adjusted or altered.

The president has instructed the Russian Federation Government to bring normative acts into line with this edict following Russia's adhesion to the Agreement on the Nonproliferation of Space Rocket Technologies and with a view to complying with the Russian Federation's international obligations on the nonproliferation of rocket systems delivering weapons of mass destruction.

Russia: Defense Minister Rodionov Accused of Inaction

MK2108133096 Moscow MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS in Russian 21 Aug 96 p 1

[Report by Aleksandr Kolpakov and Aleksandr Belonovskiy: "The Defense Minister Has Spoken Little and Done Even Less During the Past Two Months"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The other day the newly appointed defense minister has finally gotten to taste the spiritual values of the Russian people. Rodionov "blew his cover" at the ceremony consecrating the Transfiguration Church of the Christ the Savior Cathedral. The general arrived without his entourage, like an ordinary believer — even though a month ago he passed over in silence a question from a MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS correspondent about his relationship with God. Although Rodionov has been heading the Defense Ministry for nearly two months now, this was nearly the general's only appearance on television.

When Rodionov was being nominated for the post military analysts asserted in unison: "With him at the helm, one can hope for an improvement in the situation in Chechnya." Much was said about the general's experience in organizing military service not only in Afghanistan, but also in the republics of the Transcaucasus, where, as is well known, a man without a dagger is not a man. It was believed that in tandem with Lebed, who is also an Afghan war veteran and "who has gone through the harsh school of hot spots," they would quickly manage to lower the temperature in these hotbeds of tension. The general also promised "to carefully plan" every operation, but it turned out that the Chechen rebels were much better prepared for an assault on Groznyy. By official estimates only, about 500 Russian servicemen were killed during a week of intense fighting, not counting those who were crippled or lost their legs and arms. And that despite the fact that the operation was defensive in nature: Federal troops were defending fortified facilities they held under control.

Thanks to Lebed's attacks, it was Internal Affairs Minister Anatoliy Kulikov who was singled out as the scapegoat for the assault on Groznyy. Yet Lebed spared the defense minister, probably as [Lebed was] his protege. (Just as Lebed did not touch Lobov, who has yet again come to wield considerable clout.) Rodionov, for his part, was swift to back down, saying that since he did not plan the operation he cannot be called to account. The president pretended that nothing was the matter: Lebed, Kulikov, and Rodionov must work autonomously, meeting only at the Security Council and reporting the results of their efforts. But if both Kulikov and Lebed somehow or other revealed their "true colors" before the public, the defense minister prefers to keep a low profile. Only once has the minister's press service done a prompt job: A television news program reported that Rodionov was tasked with coordinating the activities of all the power agencies in Chechnya, and it rebuffed the report within an hour. If there is anything the new minister can skillfully avoid, it is responsibility.

His predecessor, Pavel Grachev, patiently served for a fairly long time as the universal whipping boy. Rodionov, however, is not anyone's fool. There is no chance of catching him with saying "[Yushenkov is] a vile little toad" or "[I could take Groznyy] with one regiment within two hours" before television cameras.

Otherwise, everything remains unchanged: Generals' country houses continue rising in prestigious areas outside Moscow. Conscripts assimilate the profession of construction worker with renewed vigor, mixing concrete, carrying bricks, and digging foundation pits. MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS has been receiving letters from the military next to which horror novels pale in comparison as innocent fairy tales. To all appearances, the promised military reform has once again been put in the stockade.

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The spectacular replacement of the defense minister has not changed anything in the life of servicemen in Chechnya either. Federal soldiers remain just as unclothed, hungry, and lice-ridden as before. The rebels, meanwhile, go on sporting brand new fatigues and weapons supplied directly from the Izhevsk defense plants.

When much is said about the impotence of the authorities, what is meant first of all is the impotence of the power agencies and their chiefs. Respond, Minister Rodionov, show us what you are capable of, for so many good things have been said about you....

Russia: Rokhlin Statement on Army's Plight Viewed

MM2108130096 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 21 Aug 96 p 1

[Article by Petr Karapetyan: "They Say There Will Be No Financial Crisis in the Country. Officers' Families Encountered It a Long Time Ago"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Some days ago Senior Lieutenant Khorushev, deputy commander of an educational work company in the 8th Guards Army Corps 242d Motorized Infantry Regiment, committed suicide. Apparently, because his pay had been delayed, he was unable to provide for his family, his child had been fainting from hunger, and his landlord had been asking him to leave his apartment — for a long time he had had no money to pay the rent....

This is just one episode from a press statement by Lev Rokhlin, chairman of the State Duma Defense Committee. It is not an isolated case, he claims. This year 392 servicemen have been killed or have died in the Army and Navy as a result of incidents, the statement says. Nearly one-third of them committed suicide, and there was a sharp, 20 percent, increase in the number of suicides when not carrying out duties. Among officers the increase was 28 percent. Most of the tragedies, Rokhlin claims, are due to the significant fall in servicemen's living standard and the desperate situation when it comes to providing them with allowances of any kind.

As of 19 August 1996 the total budget debt to the Armed Forces exceeded 15 trillion rubles [R]. State officials radiating optimism in connection with the course of the economic reforms have learned to ignore the fact that officers have not received their pay for some months now and have not receive allowances for food rations, apartment rental, and children for between six months and a year. Apparently it does not bother them a great deal (if at all) that graduates from military schools, on arriving for their first tour as officers, are unable to get a proper allowance and interest-free loan to set up house for the first time. As a result young officers are leaving the Army in droves. But this is clearly no cause for concern for state officials.

Neither is the fact that in most units it is impossible to go on leave or to travel outside the garrison: Transport organizations will not accept travel documents, because of the Defense Ministry's failure to pay its debts. Thousands of servicemen and their wives and children, Lev Rokhlin's statement says, are spending their leave...at railroad stations and airports, hoping for a miracle. No other hope exists: The government says there is no crisis, it claims that the long-awaited stabilization has come, yet the Defense Ministry still has no money. It has gotten to the point where an officer, on receiving the news of the death of a close relative, is unable to go to the funeral.

You find tragic situations in families. Captain Nikolay Sharovarenko, a company commander, recently came to Moscow from Kaluga to seek the truth. He cannot solve the problem on the spot. He has two children. His wife recently had an operation. The doctors advised her to eat better. Good advice. Thank you for the concern, of course, but you might also suggest to the officer how he can do that. But it is not a question for the doctors. Sharovarenko pays R400,000 per month for his apartment; the last time he received his pay, which is R675,000, was two months ago. A pretty "stable" economic situation, you will agree, in terms of the average officer's family. What is he to do, how can he live and at the same time carry out his official duties and command a company?

Lev Rokhlin is also sounding the alarm in connection with the following. The lack of proper funding has also had an effect on the construction of housing for the Army. In 1995 and in the first half of 1996 it was only 40 percent implemented. Many servicemen, having served 20-30 years and having seen quite a few godforsaken places, are long past the age when they can be happy in a crude hut. But that is not taken into account: They are unable to obtain either housing or the money to buy it.

Lev Rokhlin recently received what was in a sense a unique letter from a military official. Because of the lack of budget funding, it says, there are no legal grounds (?!) for paying servicemen to constructive cooperative housing. It takes a sharp bureaucratic mind to keep coming up with that kind of thing. For example, linking budget problems to a special view of what is legal. Will we soon be hearing that because of the lack of money there are no legal grounds for paying servicemen?

The State Duma Defense Committee chairman says that many servicemen are openly expressing dissatisfaction

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with the serious material situation and anger at the failure to implement state guarantees of social protection. There have already been instances of public protests and even the setting up of strike committees, Rokhlin stressed.

Here are some examples.

At the Air Defense Forces aviation regiment in Kursk on 26 July women blocked the airfield runway, hoping to draw attention to the fact that their husbands were not being paid.

At the aviation unit in the city of Engels on 6 June wives blocked the runway and sent a complaint to the president and the State Duma.

At the Pacific Fleet wives attempted to prevent submarines from going on patrol for the same reason.

At the Urals Military District wives carrying placards went to the Yekaterinburg Administration building demanding the payment to their husbands of any arrears.

The Duma received a telegram from the settlement of Seryshevo in Amur Oblast: Families in the garrison are starving, people are fainting. There has been no money since May.

There was a telegram from Borisoglebsk: Families in the aviation unit are starving. The reason is the same.

Commissioned and noncommissioned officers are forced to ask the commander to to allocate time for work in commercial structures. Some are earning a crust as security guards, others as longshoremen or hospital attendants. Both lieutenants and colonels, that is.

But then there is Chechnya as well. You cannot earn any money there. Because of the lack of financial provisions 75 percent of the soldiers and sergeants of the 205th Motorized Infantry Brigade in Groznyy cannot be discharged. Some 200 people in the 506th Regiment are sitting on their suitcases for the same reason.

One of two things has to be admitted: Either the financial crisis, which they tell us does not exist, actually does exist, or servicemen and their families have been placed outside the confines of the economic reforms, which, as they tell us with the same insistence, are proceeding full steam ahead and not unsuccessfully.

The lack of funding has other effects. Lev Rokhlin stressed that it is preventing not only the reform of the Army, but also the straightforward reduction of forces. The Defense Committee chairman draws journalists' attention to the way other power structures are ballooning madly. The Internal Forces are now as big as the Ground Forces. The border guards have doubled their number of generals. The Emergencies Ministry is trying to increase its numbers by 20,000. These departments are pursuing their own narrow interests, Rokhlin says. There is no single superior organ to control them and there is no integrated concept of the country's security. And all this in conditions where there is growing discontent in the Army.

Rokhlin calls for urgent efforts to pay what the Army is owed, to revise the budget for the final quarter of 1996 (according to the most modest estimates, a further R40 trillion is required), set the army budget for 1997 no lower than 5.1 percent of GDP, and make financial provision for the reform of the Army. And on top of that, create an organ that has power over all power structures, thus enabling it to moderate the ambitions of individual leaders and ensuring financial savings.

Russia: Servicemen's Pay Plight Defies Statistics

MM1608085196 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 14 Aug 96 p 1

[Article by Colonel Ivan Ivanyuk: "You Cannot Make Any Further Savings on Army. New Government Should Realize This"]

[FBIS Translated Text] If you are to put forward a simplified model of a serviceman's behavior, he is ideally a person who waits for orders to be given. As far as everything else is concerned, let us say that the state takes care it.

Nowadays the Russian serviceman is a person who sits and waits for money. He thinks about only one thing — how to feed his family.

Each man waits for the money in his own way. Some are convinced that someone is obligated to take care of them and will do so without fail. Others think more about morals: It is wrong to condemn people to eke out a semi-starved existence who are carrying out a difficult job and neither have the right nor the opportunity to earn money on top of their pay. But what about the children, don't the children matter, after all they did not take the military oath?! But unfortunately all arguments have flaws. State officials see the situation differently.

At a recent government conference figures were presented that are capable of inducing a state of shock in any, even the most resilient officer who has not received any money for two months: The Armed Forces have been overfunded by, in all, 9 percent and their pay and allowances have been overfunded by as much as 19 percent! Does this mean that there is no point in expecting money? Let us hope they do not take back the extra percentage.... The first thing that comes to mind is

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the money that was received was squandered by the Defense Ministry. An idea which individual state officials from time to time unobtrusively or, on the contrary, insistently put in the minds of the public. But what really is the case?

In reality the whole secret lies in the clever manipulation of figures. Indeed, the Defense Ministry is financed in advance of the annual budgetary allotments. The whole question is what these allotments cover. After all there is no money for anything: not for food, clothing, combat training....

As concerns servicemen's pay, for the second year in a row now the Finance Ministry is doggedly "not recognizing" supplementary pay for the difficulty and intensity of their work and other elements introduced into the Army and Navy since January 1995, and calculates expenditure for the Army's upkeep as if these payments did not exist though in reality they do. Hence the "overfulfillment" of the plan to fund the Army and, as in the olden days, the report at the high-level conference on the successes achieved by the Finance Ministry.

When after all supplements to the servicemen's official pay exist in all power departments and they are enshrined in a government decree, how on earth could they not be noticed when the federal budget is drawn up and ratified? What is the point of talking about supplements to their official pay when the budget sector workers' 54-percent raise from 1 September 1995 for some reason did not get into the 1996 budget. In short, the money that was appropriated is what is realistically speaking sufficient for three quarters instead of four. This is how around 75-80 percent of the funds have already been spent and pay and allowances, not to mention benefits for children and other payments, have not been paid in the Armed Forces even during the first half of the year.

You can, of course, imagine yourself here as a fervent defender of the law claiming that the law takes precedence over the decree and if this or that expense is not included in the law on the budget, no decrees can be taken into consideration.. But here the duplicity of our financial and economic elite shows through. If we are to follow the letter of the law, in accordance with the Law on the Status of Servicemen it was agreed as early as last year that official pay in the Army and Navy would be indexed at 84 percent. So does it emerge that inconvenient laws do not have to be implemented?

Of course, both at the Finance Ministry and within the government there was still an understanding that if an officer's pay is cut not on paper but in practice, servicemen's families will simply not survive. Last year emergency measures were taken, articles in the military budget were adjusted, and in the end all types of remuneration were paid out, albeit after a significant delay.

But now there is not even room for such weak optimism. A year ago inflation was much higher and it was artificially lowered when the budget was drawn up as a result of which it brought in significant unplanned revenue to the budget's income component. Now at the end of the year there will be no such presents amounting to tens of trillions of rubles. Back then there were also other sources of revenue. However unsuccessful last year's privatization program was, it nevertheless provided the treasury with several trillion rubles. But now it seems that there is nothing on which we may count.

This may be elicited from the information which is filtering through into the press in connection with the now universally recognized budget crisis. Reports have appeared in the mass media about the authorities preparations to suspend a number of the most costly presidential edicts and directives and government decrees and orders. Also mentioned are laws which it is possible will have to be revoked or suspended, thereby stopping concessions and benefits to various categories of Russian citizen. They include staffers of prosecutors' offices, judges, Chernobyl victims, and MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs] pensioners.

We were able to find out that in connection with the stopping of gaps in the budget, the government conference also examined the question of an "assault" on servicemen's privileges, but it seems that this route was nevertheless rejected. I would like to believe that good sense has prevailed for a long time to come. I think that now even those petty bureaucrats who are most removed from life can see clearly that you cannot make any further savings on the Army. None whatsoever. Even if you wanted to. Money is indeed the blood of the economy, and a lack of it for the needs of the Armed Forces means the blood of our enlisted men and officers, including those involved in the recent events in Chechnya.

I would like to believe that in the new Cabinet of Ministers — which will have to accomplish difficult tasks — no one will get the idea of repairing the economy and budget at the expense of servicemen and members of their families. This scheme has no future. And it is extremely dangerous.

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Russia: Former General Staff Official Interviewed

MM2208111596 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 22 Aug 96 pp 1-2

[Interview with Colonel General Viktor Barynkin, former chief of the General Staff Main Directorate for Operations, by Vladimir Klimov, preceded by explanation of circumstances of interview; place and date not given: "Nuclear Attack or Minister"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Fatal instances of bad luck do occur in life.... After the president's edict on transferring to a professional army by the year 2000 I decided to interview one of the Defense Ministry leaders. I received the reply: "The minister (Grachev at that time) will not speak, the chief of General Staff has only just given an interview to KRASNAYA ZVEZDA. Ask his first deputy — the chief of the Main Directorate for Operations [GOU]."

For civilians and the uninitiated I should say that the GOU is the most thoughtful part of the army brain center that is the General Staff. An interview with its chief — what could be more interesting? Colonel General Viktor Barynkin, who headed the GOU at the time, did not immediately agree to answer a series of questions. And when he did agree he stressed: We are a strictly military structure and we can speak of the military reform and the reforming of the Armed Forces (which are far from the same thing) only from an operational, combat viewpoint without touching on economic and mobilization issues.

That was what we decided. I prepared my questions. GOU specialists tried where possible to answer them in depth, in a manner comprehensible to the reader unversed in military subtleties.

Time passed. The day came when I received a telephone call and was told: "You can get the answers and familiarize yourself with them. If necessary you can also talk personally with the GOU chief."

In the morning I received the answers. During my trip by subway from the army "White House," on the Arbat, to the editorial office much changed in the military department. A number of top officials were dismissed. They included Viktor Mikhaylovich Barynkin. I do not know the reasons for his dismissal. I ascertained only one thing: He was not involved in any of the machinations about which so much has been said and written.

And so the interview was left hanging. In my view it is a very important interview which clearly proves that unless there is military reform there will be no army capable of countering enemies. I waited for the appointed of a new defense minister. I waited until then. And then I telephoned the GOU....

Lieutenant General Yuriy Baluyevskiy was temporarily acting as GOU chief. He knew the answers to the questions since he himself had taken an active part in their preparation. Yuriy Nikolayevich readily agreed to talk with me and become the interview's author. But....

"You can understand yourself that I cannot do it without the leadership's agreement. Phone me back later...."

What happened then confused even me, a reserve colonel familiar with bureaucratic procedures in my own department. I became actually convinced that even for top-ranking officials in the Defense Ministry a new minister is more terrible than an atom bomb.

Lieutenant General Baluyevskiy put the question of the interview to Army General Mikhail Kolesnikov, the chief of General Staff. The reply was:

"Why do you need it?"

Yuriy Nikolayevich is a man of honor. Since he had promised me the interview he went further. He showed its text to First Deputy Minister Andrey Kokoshin. This time the reply was more diplomatic:

"Some elements have become obsolete here. They must be updated."

That was logical. I telephoned Kokoshin but I managed to talk only to his press secretary. I asked him to organize a meeting with his boss or at least a telephone conversation in order to make changes to the interview or to have a new one. I received a firm promise that they would tell me the same day of the decision Mr. Kokoshin had made. I am still waiting for the telephone call.

And I think that the aborted interview should be published. Readers should know that the presidential edict was not an election ploy but a tough requirement for qualitatively new combat equipment and weapons, a requirement of our time. And above all it means that... the infantry no longer rules the battlefields.

[Klimov] There is already experience of professional armies. In which countries, and what does it teach us?

[Barynkin] Armies are staffed on a volunteer basis in the United States, Britain, Canada, Belgium, Luxembourg, and japan. As of this year the Netherlands, Italy, and Portugal are repealing the draft. France has decided to make its army a professional one by the year 2015. Vigorous debate is under way in Germany on the transition to an army of this kind. No final decision has yet been taken but it is known that 56 percent of the country's population favors the repeal of universal military

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service. So that the Russian Federation president's decision to switch by the year 2000 to staffing the Armed Forces on a professional basis does not seem exceptional in any way. It is natural.

[Klimov] Does the trend toward the professionalization of modern armies have purely military foundations? Today there is a lot of talk about precision weaponry. What are the main ways in which precision weaponry affects the alteration of the nature of modern combat operations?

[Barynkin] There has now been a reduction in the possibility of unleashing large-scale military operations, especially using nuclear weapons. At the same time there has been an increase in the likelihood of the outbreak of local (regional) wars and armed conflicts in which the armed forces of the world's largest countries, including Russia, could be involved.

Modern armies' saturation with precision weaponry is showing a steady tendency to increase and we should expect that in the early 21st century precision weaponry will comprise the main mass of conventional arms for the armed forces of the most developed states.

Under the influence of precision weaponry combat operations in military conflicts often acquire a clearly defined air-ground nature and differ substantially from wars of the past. As a rule they will be waged throughout the entire depth of the opposing sides' disposition of forces in the absence of a continuous front line and direct contact between the ground forces groupings.

The most characteristic actions of the opposing sides will be noncontact forms of armed struggle based on the delivery of massive and concentrated precision weaponry fire strikes combined with electronic countermeasures against troop and weaponry control points. According to the calculations of military specialists in the course of several massive precision weaponry fire strikes the main troop control points, air defense forces and facilities, and electronic warfare facilities can be destroyed in a brief time and the combat potential of a grouping of troops can be reduced 30-40 percent.

Thus, for instance, when the NATO troops were delivering strikes in Bosnia and Herzegovina only guided weapons were used. Whereas in the "Desert Storm" operation precision weaponry accounted for only 15 percent of the total quantity of weapons used and only half of the designated targets were struck, in Bosnia and Herzegovina this number was close to 100 percent. Here it must be noted that the use of precision weaponry is not of a "blanket" nature but is selective and losses among the civilian population are reduced to a minimum which is very important when resolving local conflicts.

We can also speak of a radical change in the "technology" which used to exist for conducting combat operations. In brief its thrust can be described as follows. Initially through the use of precision weaponry it is essential to win and retain fire supremacy and then, through the coordinated and massive application of available weapons to inflict a decisive defeat on the enemy troops and after that to use the actions of the combined-arms formations to complete their routing.

Naturally, under the conditions of the use of precision weaponry there is a substantial reduction in the weight of the sides' positional battles. The desire to make rapid use of the results of massive fire strikes will lead to a rapid growth in the maneuvering operations of highly mobile forces. Classic ground forces groupings will obviously be brought into the fighting only with the defeat of the main groupings.

The material basis for the wide-scale use of precision weaponry will be search and destroy systems formed as a result of the further integration of reconnaissance facilities and the automation of control, guidance, effective engagement, and electronic warfare.

[Klimov] In your view how has the development of precision weaponry affected the trend toward the army's professionalization?

[Barynkin] The development of precision weaponry is a leading trend in staffing the Armed Forces on a professional basis. At the same time of the 150 states which maintain armed forces only a few now have a completely professional army. The other countries still adhere to the principle of a mixed staffing system. In our view mass armies "encased in armor" should give way to small professional armies capable of making effective use of and of servicing modern complex weaponry. It seems to me that the numerical strength of such an army will be smaller than that of traditional mass armies and will be compensated for by the high degree of efficiency of the weapons and their skilled use.

This view is already being confirmed. Thus, whereas during the war in the Persian Gulf the emphasis was on a powerful ground grouping of multinational forces whose transfer took several months, in the Yugoslav crisis it was replaced by precision weaponry.

Technological supremacy in weapons is now attainable only through the selection of personnel for quality. Only professionals whose term of service is not limited to one or two years can master precision weaponry to perfection and develop skills in using, servicing, and repairing it.

[Klimov] In connection with the transition to a professional army how will the identity of the Russian Armed

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Forces change? Will the division into categories and branches of forces be retained? Will military districts remain and what will their role be?

[Barynkin] In the various branches of the Armed Forces the transition to a professional army will take varying times. Its qualitative content will also change. In the high-technology branches of the Armed Forces (Strategic Missile Forces, Air Defense, Navy, Air Force) where the proportion of officers, ensigns, and contract servicemen is already high, the transition could be made considerably more rapidly than in the ground forces. In the latter some formations and units will be fully deployed and manned by professionals while the other part — considerably larger — will be maintained at peace time level, which is 15-30 percent of the war time level and will be the basis for mobilization deployment.

As for the branches and categories of forces, this division of the Armed Forces will be retained although we do not rule out subsequently the possible unification of some of them.

Military districts as territorial operational-strategic formations will be kept. At the same time it will be necessary to specify the tasks set them. Thus, for instance, the military commissariats which are engaged in calculating mobilization resources and national economic equipment, in registering pre-draftees for military-occupational specialties and military units and in drafting citizens to military service will obviously be transformed into organs which will select contract soldiers for the Russian Federation Armed Forces, advertise military service, carry out professional selection, and so forth. [Barynkin ends]

P.S. That is the interview, supplemented by a talk with Lieutenant General Baluyevskiy, which I intended to publish. What does it contain that is reprehensible or that gives rise to grave doubts? Nothing. I am sure that Defense Minister Colonel General Igor Nikolayevich Rodionov will give a positive assessment of this publication.

But so far common sense is obviously not in fashion in the military department. Griboyedov's "But my god, what will Princess Marya Alekseyna say?" [reference to quotation from the play "woe from wit" used when someone flouts convention] is far more powerful.

Regional Affairs

Russia: Lebed Arrives in Novyye Atagi for Talks With Maskhadov

LD2208082296 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0700 GMT 22 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The talks between Aleksandr Lebed and Aslan Maskhadov have just resumed. Our correspondent Nikolay Mumalashvili reports.

[Mumalashvili] Russian Security Council Secretary Aleksandr Lebed arrived at the settlement of Novyye Atagi in the morning of 22 August for the second round of talks with the leaders of the opposition, in particular with Aslan Maskhadov. The parties are preparing to discuss the technical issues relating to the parting of the warring sides.

A minute before the talks started — and they began at 1040 — Aleksandr Lebed said, and I quote: We have sat down at the negotiating table with the firm intention of coming to an agreement.

Our correspondents have reported that first and foremost the sides intend to discuss the conditions for a cease-fire at the talks. Aleksandr Lebed's proposal for resolving the crisis situation in Chechnya boils down to setting up a demilitarized zone in Groznyy, which envisages the withdrawal of federal forces from the town. It is also possible that the troops will be withdrawn from the foothills.

At the main separatist headquarters, INTERFAX was told that a document putting an end to the war in the republic is expected to be signed today, according to the outcome of the talks between Lebed and Maskhadov.

Russia: Lebed Begins Talks With Chechen Separatist Leader Maskhadov

LD2108182896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1752 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SOUTH CHECHNYA, Aug 21 (Interfax) — Talks between Russian Security Council Secretary and presidential envoy in Chechnya Aleksandr Lebed and Chechen rebel forces commander Aslan Maskhadov began in the village of Novye Atagi, southern Chechnya, on Wednesday evening.

When asked about the future of Gen. Konstantin Pulikovsky's ultimatum demanding that civilians leave Groznyy before 0800 Thursday, he said that "we will resolve this problem by the morning."

While solving the problem, "we will be guided by humanness [word as received] and reason," Lebed said.

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"We will no longer speak the language of ultimatums," he said.

Asked if Pulikovsky's ultimatum was coordinated with the Russian leadership, he said the ultimatum had "not been coordinated with anybody."

"It's all the same with us. Nobody has given power away to anybody. It just needs to be taken. That's what I'm doing here quietly," Lebed said.

"Unified command needs to be reinstated here. There will be no more ultimatums," he said.

Right before the talks, Lebed voiced the hope that the issue concerning the establishment of peace and the "separation of those fighting" would be "settled as earlier agreed."

Russia: Lebed, Maskhadov Agree To End Ultimatums in Chechen Talks

LD2208090496 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 0800 GMT 22 Aug 96

[From the "Novosti" newscast; report by correspondent Vasiliy Panchenkov]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Video shows caption: footage of press bureau of the Russian Interior Ministry Internal Troops] Having arrived yet again in Chechnya, Aleksandr Lebed, chairman [as heard] of the Russian Security Council, presidential aide, did not spend much time at the headquarters of the provisional joint forces. On his way to the village of Novyye Atagi to meet Aslan Maskhadov the Russian president's plenipotentiary representative in Chechnya talked to journalists currently working in Groznyy. Helicopters brought Aleksandr Lebed and a group of journalists to the Russian checkpoint nearest to Novyye Atagi where a convoy of cars was waiting for them.

On the first floor of the house belonging to Abubakar Gamargayev, a local resident, Aleksandr Lebed, Sergey Kharlamov, his deputy, and Sergey Burutin, a senior Security Council official, were met by Aslan Maskhadov and Movladi Udugov. Khozh-Akhmed Yarikhanov and Shirvani Basayev, who arrived together with the Chechen separatist leaders, did not take part in the talks. Behind closed doors, the sides put a map of Groznyy on the table and had a three-hour discussion. Having completed their work, the parties to the dialogue invited the journalists.

[Begin recording] [Lebed] We have decided and agreed that from now and forever ultimatums are fundamentally not a language for us to talk to each other. I for one undertake enhanced socialist pledges to refrain from giving ultimatums to anyone in the future.

We discussed and agreed on the general approaches to disengaging the sides of confrontation and we hope to complete this work by signing a certain document on the sides' pledges.

[Maskhadov] The main thing is that I have always been saying — and today we agreed with Aleksandr Ivanovich [Lebed] — that there should be no ultimatums indeed. Ultimatums are a facile solution, they open a way to fighting and killing each other. It is very bad because other people suffer over a decision made by two people. But it is much more difficult to sit together and analyze soberly and realistically what should be done to avert killings. Patience and goodwill, and so on are needed for this. I believe that we are finding this patience as well as mutually acceptable options. [end recording]

[Panchenkov] Aleksandr Lebed and Aslan Maskhadov returned to the negotiating table this morning.

Russia: Lebed, Maskhadov Reach Agreements on Normalizing Situation

LD2208114996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1132 GMT 22 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NOVYYE ATAGI, Aug 22 (Interfax) — Russian Security Council Secretary Aleksandr Lebed and Chechen military commander Aslan Maskhadov reached a number of agreements to normalize the situation in Groznyy.

The talks in the village of Novyye Atagi are still continuing.

The two officials agreed to partially remove troops from Groznyy, set up joint military police offices to maintain public order, protect empty homes from plunder and prevent provocations that may disrupt the peace process.

Work on the document, which will contain the agreements reached, will last until about 4 p.m., an Interfax correspondent reported.

He noted that the talks were very calm. One can feel the willingness of both sides to work out a document which will consider the smallest settlement details in order to prevent new disruptions of the peace process, he said.

After talks with Maskhadov, Lebed plans to meet with the commander of Russian forces in Chechnya, Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, and then fly back to Moscow.

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Russia: Sides Begin Work on Document at Lebed-Maskhadov Talks

LD2208103896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1019 GMT 22 Aug 96

[By Andrey Surzhanskiy]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NOVYYE ATAGI, CHECHEN REPUBLIC August 22 (Itar-Tass) — A short break was announced at the talks, held here by Aleksandr Lebed, Secretary of the Security Council and official representative of the President in Chechnya, and Chechen chief of staff Aslan Maskhadov. After the break the sides will begin the work on a final text of the document, which they intend to sign, Lebed's press secretary Aleksandr Barkhatov told journalists. According to Barkhatov, the final text of the document will be ready in an hour of two. It will include provisions on the disengagement of the warring sides, the pullout of troops and joint control over individual districts of Groznyy.

Commenting on the talks, Barkhatov said they were going on well, "in a good pace and in a good mood."

Russia: Lebed Comments on Groznyy Ultimatum, Peace Process

LD2208083996 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0400 GMT 22 Aug 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast; passages in quotation marks recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night Aleksandr Lebed said the following at a news conference, and I quote: I think it is already clear to everyone that the declared ultimatum was a bad joke.

Our correspondent Sergey Zenin has told us that there will be no storming of Groznyy. Over to his report.

[Zenin] At a news conference in Khankala, the Security Council secretary made an official statement with regard to the federal command's ultimatum.

[Lebed] "We will not use the language of ultimatums any more."

[Zenin] Aleksandr Lebed doubted very much that the ultimatum had actually been sanctioned by the head of the Russian state.

[Lebed] "I am still not convinced that this was done by the president. There is a facsimile signature there, but I have not yet seen the president. [brief interruption by correspondent] It is impossible to implement this task, i.e, to begin a war, to end a war — and the liberation of Groznyy means wide-scale combat actions — to restore the original situation, to withdraw the troops, and to continue the peace talks, and all this in 10 days. This is some kind of wild mix. I am not sure that this was done by the president."

[Zenin] In theory, Security Council secretary was given extensive powers by the Russian president. The man who is being idolized by the whole of Chechnya achieves everything himself in practice. The statement that Groznyy will be bombed in 48 hours shows that not everyone in Moscow agrees with Lebed's peace plans.

[Lebed] "No one has given me power. One should just simply take it, and this is exactly what I am doing gradually. I am restoring the principle of the single command, the firm single command. [brief interruption by correspondent] There will be no ultimatum."

[Zenin] Lebed decided not to postpone the talks with the opposition which were planned for the morning. We are now in the village of Novyye Atagi. The clock ticking away the time to the end of 48 hours which could prove fatal for Groznyy has been stopped, and for ever, one hopes. So, this is what the general had to say.

[Lebed] "We recalled that we used to serve in the same army, that we are officers, and that nothing is more reliable in the world than an officer's word."

[Zenin] Chechen General Aslan Maskhadov absolutely agrees with his colleague of the same rank.

[Maskhadov] "We are trying to do everything in such a way as not to fail each other, and to carry out everything we want in practice, in reality, so that we do not resent each other afterwards."

Russia: Leded, Staff Discuss Chechnya; Kulikov 'in Charge' of Staff

LD2108133296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1326 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, August 21 (Itar-Tass) — Russian Security Council Secretary Aleksandr Lebed held the first meeting of his staff for the settlement of the Chechen crisis before flying to Groznyy on Wednesday [21 August].

Lebed put Russian Interior Minister Anatoliy Kulikov in charge of the staff. Pavel Golubets, head of the Interior Ministry's main staff, will carry out day-to-day management of the new structure set up to help the president's special envoy to Chechnya coordinate conflict settlement efforts in the region.

The staff also includes representatives of all ministries and departments that have troops.

Lebed has instructed his staff to draft presidential decrees aimed at improving military management in

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Chechnya. Kulikov will continue to perform his previous functions.

Proposals were also made to improve information support for the group of Russian troops in Chechnya, the press service of the Security Council said.

Russia: Lebed Presence in Chechnya Changes Attitude of Warring Sides

LD2208064396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0631 GMT 22 Aug 96

[By Nikolay Zagnoyko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, August 22 (Itar-Tass) — The presence in Chechnya of secretary of the Russian Security Council Aleksandr Lebed who is also the Russian president's plenipotentiary representative in Chechnya and his resolute actions in favour of a peaceful solution of the conflict have made substantial adjustments in the attitude of the warring sides.

The last night passed in Groznyy without an artillery cannonade for the first time in many days. It is relatively quiet in the city now. Civilians who have not left the city, continue to stay in shelters.

Rumbling died away in the area of the Minutka Square where an operation to capture commanding features of the ground continued till late Wednesday evening. Assault groups of interior troops managed to consolidate in multi-storeyed buildings surrounding the junction of Groznyy thoroughfares.

They are in no hurry to develop their success, waiting for decisions promised by Lebed by this morning. There is no official information so far on whether Groznyy will be assaulted on not.

Russia: Lebed Reportedly 'Countermanded' 48-Hour Groznyy Ultimatum

LD2108192896 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1900 GMT 21 Aug 96

[rom the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] We start our bulletin with the latest news just received from our correspondent in Chechnya, Sergey Zenin.

The main news is that Security Council secretary Aleksandr Lebed has countermanded the ultimatum declared by Konstantin Pulikovskiy, acting commander of the united group of federal forces in Chechnya. The 48-hour deadline before which the residents of Groznyy were to have evacuated the city has been called off.

Aleksandr Lebed announced this decision before departure by air to the village of Novyye Atagi, where he is now conducting talks with Aslan Maskhadov, chief of staff of the armed opposition. According to Lebed, the Pulikovskiy ultimatum was the result of the absence of a unified command in resolving issues associated with the settlement of the Chechen conflict.

Russia: Lebed Calls Groznyy Ultimatum 'Bad Joke'

LD2108215696 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 2136 GMT 21 Aug 96

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondents Andrey Surzhanskiy and Nikolay Zagnoyko]

[FBIS Translated Text] Novyye Atagi, Chechen Republic [no date as received] (ITAR-TASS) — "There will be no bombardment of Groznyy. I think that it is already clear to everyone that the ultimatum was a bad joke," Security Council Secretary Aleksandr Lebed said today.

Replying to a question by the ITAR-TASS correspondent after the talks which took place in the Chechen village of Novyye Atagi with Aslan Maskhadov, chief of staff of the militants, he said: "We again came to the conclusion that one should not talk the language of ultimatums."

Russia: Rodionov 'Had Nothing To Do' With Pulikovskiy Ultimatum

LD2108131296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1301 GMT 21 Aug 96

[By Sergey Trofimov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VOLGOGRAD August 21 (Itar-Tass) — Russian Defence minister Igor Rodionov said on Wednesday [21 August] that federal troops commander in Chechnya Konstantin Pulikovskiy had acted on his own while issuing a 48-hour warning to Groznyy civilians to leave the city after which an all-round attack on the separatists is to begin.

Rodionov told Tass in Volgograd that he "had nothing to do with the ultimatum of Pulikovskiy".

He added that the commander had "displayed initiative" in issuing the ultimatum and was "reprimanded" for that.

"He has not agreed that issue with me", Rodionov said and added that someone had "provoked Pulikovskiy" to make such a "wrong move". However, he did not name the person.

Rodionov said that "it had been explained to Pulikovsky that he should have not done that as it is not his level, but the level of the leadership of the country".

The ultimatum expires on Thursday, however, Russian troops launched a major artillery shelling of Groznyy

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already on Wednesday while estimated 150,000 civilians were yet in the city.

Russia: Rodionov: Pulikovskiy 'Told Off' for Groznyy Ultimatum

LD2108122896 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1217 GMT 21 Aug 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Sergey Trofimov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Volgograd, 21 Aug (ITAR-TASS) — Russian Defense Minister Igor Rodionov stated today that he had "nothing to do with Pulikovskiy's ultimatum." In the minister's words, the acting commander of the federal forces in Chechnya had "taken this initiative," for which he had been "told off."

On 19 August, Konstantin Pulikovskiy announced that all civilians should leave Groznyy within 48 hours, after which an assault on the city could begin.

Russia: Defense Minister Rodionov Gives Views on Chechnya Situation

LD2108180196 Moscow NTV in Russian 1500 GMT 21 Aug 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast presented by Aleksandr Shashkov]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Igor Rodionov] Russian defense minister today went to Volgograd for the day to meet the participants in the command and staff exercises of the North-Caucasus [Military] District. After the meeting, the defence minister answered questions from a Volgograd Television correspondent. Rodionov said he had nothing to do with the ultimatum made by General Pulikovskiy who plans to use all the Army's firepower against the rebels controlling Groznyy.

[Begin recording] [Rodionov] I criticized General Pulikovskiy yesterday [20 August]. I sharply criticized his statement. He has no right at all to make such statements. Such statements should be made by the head of the country's political leadership who is in charge of the situation as a whole, including the military one. He should assess what is happening and what measures are being taken and, inter alia, the civilian population should be warned. A military man should not get involved in these problems. Someone provoked Pulikovskiy to do this. He acted wrongly. There were no such commands or such instructions.

[Unidentified correspondent] When will [Gen. Vyacheslav] Tikhomirov [commander of federal troops in Chechnya] assume his duties?

[Rodionov] Tikhomirov? Let's ask the commander of the district.

[Commander of North-Caucasus Military District] At 1800 yesterday [20 August]...

[Rodionov, interrupting] He familiarized himself with the situation yesterday and assumed command of the troops. This morning when I was still in Moscow he reported to me from the spot that he had resumed command.

[Correspondent] When will the gunfire in Chechnya stop?

[Rodionov] The sooner the better.

[Correspondent] Do you know [Aleksandr] Lebed's plan for a settlement in Chechnya?

[Second unidentified correspondent] Which he is supposed to submit on 26 August? Did you make any proposals regarding the plan?

[Rodionov] I do not know the concrete plan but his first and foremost task is to achieve a cease-fire so that there is no provocative shooting, above all from the other side, from the opposition side.

[Correspondent] Did you have a meeting with Lebed prior to his departure for Chechnya?

[Rodionov] Yes, I did.

[Correspondent] Was it a long conversation?

[Rodionov] Yes, it was a long conversation. There were three of us: He, [Anatoliy] Kulikov [minister of internal affairs], and I.

[Correspondent] Did you reconcile them?

[Rodionov] We did not even mention what happened before. Mainly, we were seeking new approaches to resolve this most complex situation. [end recording]

Russia: Military Says Withdrawal of Troops by Sep Not Possible

LD2208100596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0949 GMT 22 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, August 22 (Interfax) — President Boris Yeltsin's decision to withdraw the Russian Defense Ministry's units from Chechnya by September cannot be put into action, a spokesman for the armed forces' general headquarters told Interfax today, explaining this failure by the sharp buildup of fighting in Groznyy since August 6.

"Up to now two motorized infantry regiments have left Chechen territory and returned to their permanent bases," the spokesman said, adding that overall military leadership in Chechnya is being exercised by Russian

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Interior Minister Anatoliy Kulikov. "The Defense Ministry cannot independently decide on taking the units out of the republic," stressed the source.

The military told Interfax that the final terms for Russian troop withdrawal from Chechnya will depend on the situation in the republic and on the outcome of talks between Russian Security Council Secretary Aleksandr Lebed and the Chechen separatist leadership.

There have been plans to deploy a motorized infantry brigade and a brigade of Internal Ministry troops in Chechnya after September 1.

Russia: Federal Source Gives Update on Groznyy Situation

LD2208104396 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1000 GMT 22 Aug 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Boris Kipkeyev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 22 Aug (ITAR-TASS) — A period of quiet has come to Groznyy. There is practically no shooting, and the air force and artillery of the federal forces are not "working," ITAR-TASS learned at the headquarters of the joint group of federal forces in Khankala.

The source noted that "the headquarters of the federal forces is elucidating its tasks" set today for the group by commander Lieutenant General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov and Security Council Secretary Aleksandr Lebed. Food and water are being delivered to checkpoints, roadblocks, and positions of the federal forces in Groznyy. Wounded servicemen are being taken to hospitals.

According to the headquarters, despite the talks between Aleksandr Lebed and Aslan Maskhadov, positions of the federal troops in Groznyy came under fire on 14 occasions last night leaving dead and wounded soldiers. The militants are continuing to concentrate their groups around Minutka Square. They are building reinforcements and firing positions in the city and mining motorways.

On the whole, the situation in the Chechen republic did not get worse in the past 24 hours, according to the headquarters of the joint group of the federal forces in Chechnya. The forces' units and formations carried out engineering works and ground reconnaissance in the zones of their responsibility.

Russia: Troop Losses in Groznyy Since 6 Aug Total 1,800

LD2208092996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0922 GMT 22 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, August 22 (Interfax) — Russia has lost about 1,800 men, either killed, wounded or unaccounted for, in the Chechen capital Groznyy since August 6, military prosecutor in Chechnya Igor Shevchenko has reported.

The bodies of 376 servicemen have been evacuated through a morgue from Groznyy's Severnyy airport, he said. "The bodies of yet another 30 servicemen, killed in Groznyy, have not been moved out: some, by eye witness accounts, were torn to pieces by direct bomb hits, others could not be evacuated because of unremitted shelling" the prosecutor said.

In Groznyy 1,264 servicemen have been wounded, and 130 have been declared missing, "the bulk of them most probably died," Shevchenko suggested.

He also reported that the Caucasian Interregional Prosecutor's Office has opened a criminal case "into the militants' attempt to seize Groznyy and other Chechen towns and communities." As part of this investigation, "activities of commanders of Interior and Defense Ministries' troops will get a legal assessment," the source said, adding that it would be "premature" to hold anyone responsible for the heavy toll among servicemen in Groznyy. "A special team is investigating the past events," Shevchenko announced.

Russia: Chechen Separatist TV Talks of 'Russia's Capitulation'

LD2208120996 Moscow INFORMATSIONNOYE AGENTSTVO EKHO MOSKVY in Russian 1150 GMT 22 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] [no dateline as received] — According to official sources in the leadership of the Chechen Republic, a separatist television service is operating in Groznyy. It is broadcasting statements about the victory of the opposition and Russia's capitulation, the Mission of the Chechen Republic under the president of the Russian Federation told Ekho Moskvy radio station.

"The separatists are using the television to threaten supporters of the legal government of the Chechen Republic, and are demanding that they go over to the fighters' side," the report of the Chechen mission says.

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Russia: Columnist Asks 'Painful Questions' About Chechnya Events

MM2208082196 Moscow TRUD in Russian 22 Aug 96 p 1

[Article by political observer Yuriy Lepskiy: "Why?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Everything that we have been seeing on television, hearing on the radio, and reading in the newspapers in recent days provokes painful questions, and I wish someone would try to explain to me, and above all to the readers of TRUD:

Why, when the war in Chechnya has reached possibly the most tragic juncture and requires especially well-considered and clear-cut decisions, is the country's president going off to Valday to "get to know his future vacation spot"?

If the president really is seriously ill and the most important thing for him right now is to rest, why such stubborn silence from all those whose duty it is to first and foremost tell this to us, the people who elected him? Maybe they think that they "understand," but we will not "understand"?

On what grounds has General Pulikovskiy decided to storm the city of Groznyy, where in such an event thousands of civilians could be killed along with the gunmen? On the basis of the president's order? In that case, where is this order, why do we know nothing about it? On the basis of his own ideas about how to resolve the Chechen problem? But who authorized the army general to resolve it independently?

Why does another general — Lebed — consider the key to the Chechen problem to be the immediate dismissal of Minister Kulikov? Because his dismissal is really capable of immediately halting the bloodshed, or because General Kulikov once organized surveillance of Lebed's car and refused to submit to him? If Aleksandr Ivanovich has simply decided to put an "upstart general" in his place, why start with him, and not with the commanders of the Chechen gunmen?

Why have the recently formed government and its head, who has received the unequivocal confidence of the Duma, not convened for an extraordinary session with the aim of stopping the bloodshed and eliminating anything standing in the way of this objective?

Why are the lives of our children and the lives of Russia's Chechen citizens being sacrificed to barely distinguishable principles, or even simply to the ambitions of men in uniform and men not in uniform who are by no means brilliant, and possibly not even very clever? Surely no one values these barely distinguishable principles and far from brilliant people more than our boys, who are dying there, than the women and children, old people and teenagers in the part of Russia called Chechnya?

Why do our elected people's deputies, our numerous state functionaries, members of the people's patriotic bloc, and our ministers not consider it an honor to send their sons, nephews, and grandsons to Chechnya to defend constitutional order and the integrity of Russia? Why do they entrust this high honor to boys from provincial Russian cites and villages that have often not seen wages and pensions for months?

Why, finally, are we ourselves, very many of us, sitting at home, in dachas, on beaches, and at resorts? Are we becoming inured to what is going on? Are we forgetting that democracy makes demands not just on those voted into office, but also on the voters themselves?...

Possibly answers to these questions will somehow at least help us to penetrate the "logic of the madness" that is increasingly obscuring the essence of what is happening today around Chechnya... But who will answer these questions? Maybe the president — even from the aforementioned Valday?...

Economic Issues

Russia: Employment Minister on Indexing Wages

LD2108115696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1118 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Aug 21 (Interfax) — Despite predictions of low inflation in 1997, the practice of tying minimal wages and pensions as well as salaries in the public sector to the rate of inflation must be continued next year as well, Employment Minister Gennadiy Melikian told Interfax on Wednesday.

He is expected to make a report about draft social security laws at the first session of the new government on Wednesday. These must be sent to the State Duma together with a draft budget for 1997.

The question of indexing minimal pay and pensions was high on the agenda of the minister's meeting with representatives of departments concerned on Tuesday.

Melikian said his ministry thought it necessary to continue indexing minimal pay and pensions as well as salaries in the public sector, though not necessarily once in three months as before when inflation ran at an all-time high. He says this must be accounted for while the 1997 budget was being approved. The minister does not intend to raise the question of consolidating the resources of extra-budgetary funds in the federal budget at the first government meeting, because the urgency of the issue has now diminished. Unlike in 1992-1993

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when the profit of the extra-budgetary funds was almost equal to the budget deficit, the funds themselves are now having difficulties with fund-raising, he said.

Melikian called to tighten controls of government spending on social needs, saying he planned to set up a supervisory department within his ministry to do so.

He also said that First Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Ilyushin who is responsible for social security matters in the new Cabinet was actively involved in discussion of proposed documents on next year's social policy.

Russia: Customs Committee To Control Deadlines for Barter Deals

LD2108140096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1347 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Aug 21 (Interfax) — The Russian State Customs Committee will impose control over the deadlines for completion of barter deals as of November 1, 1996.

Marina Volkova, deputy head of the committee's currency control board, told Interfax that this step is being taken as a follow up to President Boris Yeltsin's decree On State Regulation of Barter Deals in Foreign Trade, signed Monday.

Like currency transactions, barter deals will have to be complete in 180 days, she said.

"The Russian businessman will have to supply the commodity he obtained in a barter deal to Russia no later than in six months after the commodity he sent for exchange crossed the border," Volkova explained.

Until now, barter dealers were not required to have the commodity they acquire abroad brought to Russia, she noted.

This gap in the Russian legislation enabled Russian businessmen to keep the proceeds of their deals abroad and dodge the currency control system, Volkova said.

As of November 1, barter exchange will be illegal without a contract certificate, she said.

The Foreign Economic Relations Ministry will have until November 1 to work out the procedure of obtaining such a certificate and the mechanism of supervising barter transaction, Volkova said.

The presidential decree does not require that a mechanism be set up to control the price of the commodities involved in the barter, she said.

"We still will not know what price the commodity, exported for exchange, fetches abroad. As a result, we will not know the exact amount of the proceeds our businessmen will have in hard currency," Volkova explained.

Russia: Tax Collection Could 'Drop to Zero' as Result of New Law

MM2108143796 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 21 Aug 96 p 2

[Report by Andrey Rumyantsev under the "From Our Correspondents and News Agencies" rubric: "Collection of Taxes Could Drop to Zero"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "The total collapse of the budget — this year's and next year's." This was how Aleksandr Ivanyev, head of the Russian Federation Finance Ministry Tax Reform Department, summed up the present situation in a conversation with your IZVESTIYA correspondent.

The reason for such a strong reaction is a law with a long, vague title that came into force on 15 August: "On Introducing Amendments and Additions to Point 2, Article 855 of the Russian Federation Civil Code." As IZVESTIYA has already reported, enterprises which do not have enough money in their accounts to settle all their debts can now pay their workers' wages before paying their taxes.

According to Ivanyev, the draft law was drawn up in the State Duma. The government discussed it and gave a negative conclusion. Despite this, the law was adopted and signed by the president, albeit after almost a month's delay. The Federation Council did not see the document. It would not have approved it anyway, because the regions are the first to suffer from an absence of tax revenue.

There is also another aspect to the story. An IMF mission recently decided to recommend to the organization's Board of Directors that they allocate to Russia the next tranche of the credit earmarked for it. That decision could now be changed.

The fact that the problem is not far-fetched was confirmed by the barrage of telephone calls received by the IZVESTIYA editorial office after our first report. Enterprise leaders, mainly from the regions, wanted to find out which law allowed changes to be made to the order of priority for clearing debts. You could hardly describe their interest as purely theoretical.

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Russia: Economy Ministry Guardedly 'Upbeat' for 1997

MK2208105196 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 22 Aug 96 p 1

[Report by Elmar Murtazayev: "Government Discusses Budget and Social Development Forecast"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The first official meeting of the new cabinet will today discuss the draft prognosis of the main indices of Russia's socioeconomic development during the coming year. Economy Minister Yevgeniy Yasin and First Deputy Finance Minister Vladimir Petrov are supposed to present corresponding reports.

Thus, the process of presenting the main indices and budget drafts — which is taking markedly more time than last year (at that time the draft budget was put before the Duma at the end of August) — is beginning to finally pick up at the ministerial and departmental level. By taking such an extremely long time to form the cabinet the top officials have landed the government in an extremely awkward position, where the cabinet is left with as little as one or two weeks within which to consider the budget drafted by the Finance Ministry. If one is to strictly follow the letter of the law "On the Budget Discussion Procedure," the draft is supposed to be put before the State Duma before 1 September.

In the meantime, this shortage of time does not deter the officials. SEGODNYA has come to learn that the draft budget submitted for the consideration of Vladimir Potanin, first deputy premier for the economy, was sent back to its drafters with rather important remarks. There are also serious differences with regard to the main indices in the socioeconomic prognosis drawn up by the Economy Ministry. The government leaders fear a repetition of this year's experience, where, owing to objective — but mostly owing to political — reasons, and also because of administrative flaws, the Economy Ministry's 1996 projections did not come true. Whereas it seems impossible to implement the budget drawn up by the Finance Ministry.

Nevertheless, one of the draft prognoses available to SEGODNYA attests to the fact that Economy Ministry experts are rather upbeat about 1997 prospects. For example, according to their assessments, Russia's GNP will stabilize next year. According to an optimistic forecast, it will stay at the level of 1,618 trillion rubles (100 percent of the 1996 assessments); according to a pessimistic forecast, it will fall by one percent. Consumer prices will grow by 16 percent at least, and by 25 percent at most. Correspondingly, in 1997 industrial production will amount to the following: 101 and 100 percent in the electric power industry; 98 and 97 percent in oil production; 102 and 100 percent in gas production; 102 and 95 percent in machine-building; 112 and 95 percent in light industry. Unemployment, in accordance with optimistic and pessimistic forecasts, will be 4.9 percent of the manpower resources. It is, nevertheless, not ruled out that Mr. Yasin will come up with somewhat different assessments during the meeting — correction of the indices is currently in full swing.

Russia: All-Russia Forum on Power Industry Problems

MM2208102396 Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 21 Aug 96 pp 1,3

[Report by Gennadiy Lyulkin under the rubric "Alarming Situation": "Passions Boil Around Freezing Point"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The situation in Maritime Kray could recur anywhere in the country. This gloomy conclusion was expressed at the All-Russia Conference of Federation component administration heads, general directors of power and electrification joint-stock companies and power stations, and committees of the Electrical Industry Workers' Trade Union. Conference delegates offered the president and government proposals for bringing the power industry out of the crisis.

"The Russian economy is heading for total collapse and we in the power industry can see this better than anyone," declared Anatoliy Dyakov, president of the YeES Rossii [Integrated Energy System of Russia] Russian Joint-Stock Company, in his opening address. He was backed by Leningrad Oblast Governor Aleksandr Belyakov:

"At one conference," he said, "Economy Minister Yasin took great pride in the fact that inflation was 1.5 percent per month. I replied that when all industry comes to a standstill inflation will be 'zero' percent. Then you'll be happy...."

The obvious implication of this "prologue" is that the power industry crisis is a consequence of the crisis in the economy as a whole.

Nonpayments are the sector's main problem. They have reached an unimaginable level. A free power supply has become part of the national psychology. The lack of money has led to the freezing of practically all YeES Rossii Russian Joint-Stock Company accounts and regional power systems' accounts.

There is no money to buy fuel. Power stations have so far taken delivery of 50 percent of their coal and 60 percent of their fuel oil. And yet 1 October is only a month away. The fuel shortage has already brought about 20 million kw of power capacity to a standstill.

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A particularly tense situation has arisen in the Far East, Sakhalin, and Kamchatka.

There has been a deterioration in the social climate at the sector's enterprises. Wage arrears have increased almost threefold since the start of the year and amount to more than 1.5 trillion rubles.

At the end of the first half of 1996, 20 of the most efficient high-capacity power stations and 10 power and electrification joint-stock companies had made a loss.

So how is it that a world leader according to the main production indicators has been reduced to penury?

The power industry is a natural monopoly. This is precisely what many "dilettante critics" see as the root of all problems. It is because of them that "monopoly" has become a dirty word. The essence of their appeals is to abolish the monopoly, which they see as an obstacle to the development of an independent power producers' market, and on its ruins to construct something new. Speculation of that sort can be heard from every quarter.

But this theme was not debated at the conference. All agreed on one thing: the YeES Rossii Russian Joint-Stock Company is the optimal organizational structure, so its integrity must be preserved. On no account, declared A. Dyakov, must we allow the Russian power industry to be split up into "separatist territorial units." The dismemberment of the YeES Rossii Russian Joint-Stock Company will lead to the destruction of the complex and the collapse of the entire power supply system. "That would be absurdity on a radical scale."

And in order to halt attempts at structural changes the power industry representatives proposed a long-term state holding of 51 percent of the shares in the YeES Rossii Russian Joint Stock Company, with up to 50 percent of the associated votes to be given to Federation components. This would preserve state control of the power industry.

In order to settle the nonpayments the power industry representatives are asking the government, when it draws up the federal budget and allocates funds for the financing of organizations from the federal budget for 1997, to include expenditure on payments for electricity and heat as a separate entry for every federal department. In order to improve the system of collecting payments for power supplied they propose eliminating intermediate links in the consumer power supply chain and transferring power supply functions from consumer-resellers to regional power and electrification joint-stock companies.

The tariffs do not make the sector financially independent. They do not correspond to the real costs of power generation. Many speeches included this point. The power industry representatives therefore called on the government to set a standard tariff for power supplied to the population at a level no lower than the Russia-wide average cost of its generation, transmission, and distribution, and to provide the poorer sections of society with special support.

Today 20 percent of the shares in the YeES Rossii Russian Joint-Stock Company are held by foreign investors. So-called investors, because they have not put a cent into the development of the Russian power industry, though keen to gain access to its management. And money is needed desperately. Fourteen million kw of capacity has reached the end of its operating life and requires replacement. The conference produced a proposal to attract investment by creating a financial company subsidiary to the YeES Rossii Russian Joint-Stock Company which would receive on trust 8.5 percent of the state-owned shares in the YeES Rossii Russian Joint-Stock Company, with the right to use this block of shares as security for obtaining credit.

Russia: Industrialists Appeal Against Higher Energy Prices

MM2208101296 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 22 Aug 96 p 1

[Undated "Letter to the Chief Editor" from group of leading industrialists: "Leading Industrialists Hope for Kremlin Support"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The 60-percent increase in electricity prices on the wholesale market will lead to the bankruptcy of all the country's metallurgical and iron ore enterprises.

Electricity tariffs are becoming significantly higher than world prices. The export of metal is already unprofitable, and domestic metal prices are significantly higher than export prices. The possibilities for raising domestic metal prices have been exhausted.

Metallurgy is a highly energy intensive sector; the share of electricity in the cost of our output has tripled in recent times and now constitutes more than one-third of production cost.

The Ministry of Railways has imposed exorbitant tariffs on us and intends to sharply increase prices yet again. The unprecedented increase in electricity prices clearly contravenes the presidential edict and government decision on limiting the prices charged by the monopoly sectors to 0.7 of the inflation rate. The bankruptcy of our enterprises, which are factory towns, will inevitably lead to a social explosion.

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We request that our appeal be considered and a decision made.

On behalf of Russia's metallurgy and mining industry:

[Signed] S.V. Kolpakov, president of the International Union of Metallurgists,
I. Starikov, general director of the Magnitogorsk Metallurgical Combine,
P.I. Gurkalov, general director of the Orsko-Khalipovskiy Metallurgical Combine,
I.V. Frantsenyuk, general director of the Novolipetsk Metallurgical Combine,
A.A. Mardashov, general director of Severostal,
A.T. Kalashnikov, general director of the Lebidinskiy Mining and Enrichment Combine Open-Type Joint-Stock Society,
A.A. Ugarov, general director of the Oskolskoye Electromagnetic Combine.

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International Affairs

Ukraine: U.S. Ambassador Delivers Message From Clinton to Kuchma

LD2108123096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1130 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, August 21 (Interfax - Ukraine) — On Tuesday evening, US Ambassador to Ukraine William Green Miller delivered to President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine a personal message from U.S. President Bill Clinton.

As "IF-U" was told at the presidential press-service, the message, in particular, expresses support for the free market reforms in Ukraine both at the bilateral level and at that of international financial organizations.

The U.S. Ambassador has also delivered to the Ukrainian President B. Clinton's congratulations on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of Ukraine's independence. The message of congratulations stresses, in particular, that the year of 1996 has been marked with Ukraine's great success in strengthening her sovereignty, and her recognition as a factor of stability in united Europe.

The press-service said that the meeting also covered prospects for drawing U.S. private investments into Ukraine's economy, in particular, the automotive industry.

Ukraine: Udovenko Discusses Cooperation With CIS Executive Secretary

LD2108131496 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1235 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev, 21 Aug — CIS Executive Secretary Ivan Korotchenya has expressed satisfaction with the results of his meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko. He spoke of a need to discuss the results of cooperation within the CIS in the run-up to the fifth anniversary of the Commonwealth.

According to Korotchenya, he and the Ukrainian foreign minister exchanged views on the recent developments in the CIS, including the treaty on closer integration between Belarus and Russia and the agreement of four within the CIS customs union.

In his turn, Udovenko said: "Despite not having ratified the CIS statute, Ukraine is actively involved in the organization. We regard the CIS as a framework for bilateral and multilateral cooperation." He said Ukraine's activities in the CIS were "somewhat restricted" by national legislation. This position is favorably received by other CIS states and allows Ukraine to cooperate actively in all areas on the basis of national interests, the foreign minister said.

Ukraine: Kiev Denies Kuchma Met With Taiwan Vice President

LD2208052496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0204 GMT 22 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, Aug 21 (Interfax-Ukraine) — Ukrainian presidential spokesman Dmitriy Markov has categorically refuted media reports that President Leonid Kuchma had met with the Taiwanese vice president.

The reports are absolutely groundless and do not correspond to the facts, Markov told Interfax-Ukraine Wednesday.

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry said on August 20 that it had no information about the Taiwanese vice president's possible stay on Ukrainian territory.

However, Kiev University Rector Viktor Skopenko told Interfax- Ukraine Wednesday that the Taiwanese vice president made a private visit to the Ukrainian capital Tuesday.

Ukraine: Official Says Taiwanese Vice President's Visit 'Private'

LD2108122796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1130 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, August 21 (Interfax - Ukraine) — The visit paid by the Taiwanese Vice President to the Ukrainian capital was "exclusively of a private character", "IF-U" was told today by Academician Viktor Skopenko, rector of Kiev State University.

According to him, Kiev University has signed with the University of Taipei (Taiwan's capital, "IF-U" note) two cooperation agreements, the second of them this year. V. Skopenko has sent to the Vice President, who is at the same time a university professor, a private invitation half a year ago, when the latter was not a government official yet.

"My guest was staying in Kiev for one day, today he will leave for Taiwan", the Kiev University Rector said. In his words, the Taiwanese Vice President met neither with students, nor with lecturers of Kiev University.

On Tuesday, mass media informed with reference to the first Taiwanese TV channel about a possible visit of Taiwan's Prime Minister Lien Chan to Kiev. The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry stated that it has no information on a possible stay of the Taiwanese Premier in Ukraine's territory.

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As "IF-U" has learnt from usually well-informed sources, the Taiwanese Vice President was staying for a couple of days in Crimea, where he held unofficial meetings with a number of Crimean politicians and businessmen. Thus, in particular, according to the sources, he met with one of the Crimean parliamentary leaders. At the same time, the sources have not confirmed the fact of his meeting with the President of Ukraine, about which some foreign mass media reported.

Ukraine: Taiwan Vice President's Kiev Visit, Crimea Visit

MM2208080596 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 22 Aug 96 p 3

[Report by Yuriy Savenkov: "Taiwanese Vice President Has Visited Kiev"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Despite a Ukrainian Foreign Ministry official's assurances that Taiwan's Vice President Lien Chan has not crossed Ukraine's border (see IZVESTIYA 21 August this year), a television camera has filmed the eminent visitor inside Kiev University.

According to a Taiwanese television report, Lien Chan's "secret" visit was organized by Kiev University where the vice president, who already holds a political science doctorate from Chicago University, has been awarded another honorary degree, this time Ukrainian. Describing the vice president's visit to Ukraine, Taiwanese television said: The visitor has met with officials and the possibility of a conversation between him and Leonid Kuchma has not been ruled out.

As ITAR-TASS correspondent Vladimir Solntsev told IZVESTIYA from Tokyo, Taiwanese television cited a woman described as a spokeswoman of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry who said that a meeting between Leonid Kuchma and Lien Chan has not been planned but "could take place quite suddenly." Trying to guess at Kiev's motives, a Japanese newspaper even went so far as to speculate about Ukraine's desire to "deter the consolidation of military ties between Russia and the PRC."

Lien Chan admired the beauty of the Crimea and visited Yalta and the famous Livadiya Palace. Incidentally, according to a REUTER report, a Crimean Parliament spokesman told reporters in Simferopol that the visitor has met with the Crimean vice premier and the deputy speaker of the Crimean Parliament.

Today a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman in Beijing expressed concern at Lien Chan's visit to Ukraine and said that the "Chinese Government is prepared to make a representation to the Ukrainian Government."

The Foreign Ministry spokesman saw covert political motives in Lien Chan's visit. Beijing's reaction has not been limited to oral "representations." The visit to Kiev by a PRC official delegation headed by Li Tieying, member of the State Council and chairman of the State Committee for Economic Reforms, planned for 21-26 August has been canceled, REUTER reports, citing a high-ranking diplomat at the PRC embassy in Ukraine.

China is opposed to the creation of a "two Chinas" situation. There is a simple truth behind this enigmatic formula: "There is one China and Taiwan is its province." Beijing does not want a country with which it maintains diplomatic relations to develop official contacts with Taiwan.

Each side is playing its own game. Incidentally, the Chinese formula that "We do not object to unofficial ties" provides broad scope for maneuver. Ukraine, for which China is a leading trade partner (commodity turnover — $1 billion) is also interested in Taiwanese investments. But like it or not, this game will have to be played more subtly. Some 2500 years ago the wise Confucius observed: "Boldness without ritual leads to trouble."

Ukraine: PRC Embassy Announces Cancellation of Official Visit

WS2208070696 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0213 GMT 22 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, Aug 21 — The arrival of a Chinese governmental delegation to Ukraine, scheduled on Wednesday, has been postponed for an indefinite period of time in an angry reaction to the unofficial visit of the Taiwanese Vice President in Kiev August 19-21.

Spokesman from the Chinese Embassy in Ukraine, Zhang Xiao, told INTELNEWS on Wednesday that the scheduled visit of the delegation on August 21-26, which should have been headed by Li Tien, chairman of China's State Committee on Economic Reforms, has been canceled "due to the situation that developed in Kiev over the past two days."

Zhang was referring to Taiwanese Vice-President Lien Chan's arrival in Ukraine on Monday, which was unofficial and unannounced, according to Ukraine's Foreign Ministry. The Taiwanese official's visit was characterized as "private", but according to Zhang, "the visit of a person with such status cannot be considered private." The political misunderstanding has occurred because China considers Taiwan its province, and sharply protests any attempts at international recognition of the island.

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According to an INFOBANK report, Lien Chan arrived in Kiev from New York at the private invitation of Kiev University Rector Victor Skopenko (the Kiev institute has scientific connections with Taipei University in Taiwan).

Courting deeper trade relations with China, Ukraine's Foreign Ministry stated Tuesday that Ukraine adheres to the concept of a "single China and considers Taiwan one of its provinces."

Ministry department chief Yuriy Serheyev said, "Our relations with Taiwan cannot have any official character." According to the Foreign Ministry official, Ukrainian leadership maintains that relations with Taiwan should be the same as those with any Chinese province.

Ukraine recognizes the communist government in Beijing, and not Taiwan's exiled Republic of China government, but has made clear its desire for better relations with Taiwan and its powerful export-driven economy.

Since a civil war separated them in 1949, Beijing has regarded Taiwan as a renegade province ineligible for sovereign ties with other countries and has pledged to re-take Taiwan by force if it tries to become an independent country.

On Wednesday, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China (PCR) Pan Zhanlin had a meeting with Ukraine's Deputy Foreign Minister Kostyantyn Hryshchenko and expressed his concern over the visit by the Taiwanese delegation to Ukraine.

On Monday, the Taiwanese official met with the deputy chairman of the Crimean Supreme Council Anushevan Danelyan, and with the chairman of the Economic Renaissance Party of Crimea, Volodymyr Shevyov, however, Shevyov said that no political or economic talks occured. Lien Chan arrived in Kiev on Tuesday. According to Skopenko, Kiev University signed two agreements with the University of Taipei, the latter of which was signed this year. The invitation to visit Ukraine was sent privately by Skopenko to Lien half a year ago when Lien was not in any state office, but was working as a professor at the university in Taiwan.

"My guest stayed in Kiev for one day," said Skopenko, now on vacation, who also added that Lien met neither students nor instructors at Kiev University. However, an INTELNEWS correspondent observed on Tuesday that the Taiwanese delegation was met by deans and instructors from various departments near Kiev University's building on Volodymyrska St.

According to REUTERS news service, Taiwan's State Radio announced that Lien met with President Leonid Kuchma on Wednesday, however, Kuchma's spokesman Serhiy Kutsyy denied this report. Furthermore, REUTERS reported Tuesday, with a reference to state-funded Taiwan's television broadcast, that "After Vice-President Lien mysteriously disappeared from New York on Sunday, he made a brief stop-over in Vienna and then flew to the Ukrainian capital of Kiev."

Some sources in Kiev reported that Lien held unofficial meetings with various Crimean politicians and businessmen. In particular, according to the sources, Lien met one of the leaders of Crimean Parliament. Simultaneously, the sources did not confirm the rumors of Lien's alleged meeting with Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, as was reported by some foreign media.

Taiwan's authoritative UNITED DAILY NEWS, also giving no source for its information, said in Tuesday's edition that "Lien would meet in Kiev with Ukraine's head of state."

In its report on Lien's stay in Crimea, KIEVSKIE VEDOMOSTI said Wednesday, with a reference to some "contacts with the Taiwanese official" that the only object of his Crimean visit was to see the famous Livadia Palace in Yalta, where Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill staged the meeting which resulted in the postwar division of Europe.

Ukraine: Politburo Canceled Ukraine Visit 'At the 11th Hour'

HK2208062896 Hong Kong SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST in English 22 Aug 96 p 1

[By staff reporters]

[PTS Transcribed Text for FBIS] Ukraine tried last night to calm a diplomatic storm triggered by a private visit to Kiev by Taiwanese Vice-President Lien Chan, saying it should not harm relations with China.

"Nothing should cloud relations between Ukraine and China," said Ukrainian Foreign Minister Gennady Udovenko after Beijing sharply criticised Kiev for what it called a "serious violation" of its commitments to the People's Republic.

"Lien Chan's visit to Kiev, on a private invitation, should not be grounds for a decline in Ukrainian-Chinese relations," Mr Udovenko said, adding that Mr Lien had already left for Taipei.

"Kiev regards Taiwan as an indivisible part of China," he said.

China, which prohibits any nation recognising Beijing from having official contacts with Taiwan, earlier reacted angrily by rescheduling the visit of a Chinese

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Politburo member who was due to arrive in Ukraine yesterday.

Mr Udovenko said he believed the Chinese official would still visit at a later date.

Beijing is also planning a series of retaliatory measures against the administration of Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui for trying to promote "two Chinas".

A Chinese diplomat in Kiev said the trip, to be led by Politburo member Li Tieying, was "cancelled, not postponed".

The Taiwan media claimed Mr Lien met Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma after receiving an honorary doctorate from the University of Kiev and that representative offices would be opened in both capitals.

A spokesman for Mr Kuchma denied the reports: "There was no meeting. Neither official, nor private, nor non-official. I officially deny that information. There is no point at all for the President to meet him.

"The Chinese are even angry over his private stay in Ukraine."

Mr Lien was also reported to have held talks with the Ukrainian Vice-Premier, Education Minister and parliamentary officials.

The Chinese delegation, headed by Mr Li, also a State Councillor in charge of restructuring the economy, was to have spent five days in the country.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman condemned Mr Lien's visit to Ukraine.

"Lien Chan's trip to Ukraine for accepting an honorary doctorate degree from Kiev University was obviously made with political purposes," the spokesman said.

The ministry said efforts by Taiwanese leaders to promote independence were "doomed to failure".

A Chinese source said the Politburo Standing Committee met to consider China's response after Beijing learned of Mr Lien's tour to Europe early in the week. He said the decision to cancel Mr Li's visit was made "at the 11th hour".

A Xinhua (New China News Agency) report issued yesterday still mentioned the Politburo member's visit to promote economic ties.

"Beijing will do more to isolate the Lee Teng-hui administration from within and without," the source said. "Taiwan businessmen enjoying economic benefits on the mainland will be asked to put more pressure on Taipei. Beijing will spend more resources to woo countries such as South Africa away from Taiwan."

Ukraine: Spokesman Voices PRC's Opposition to Lien Chan's Kiev Visit

HK2208063096 Beijing CHINA DAILY in English 22 Aug 96 p 1

[By Guo Nei: "Objections Voiced to Lien Chan's Kiev Visit"]

[PTS Transcribed Text for FBIS] China is against Ukraine's decision to allow a visit by a leading official from Taiwan, Lien Chan.

"Obviously Lien is politically motivated in visiting Ukraine to receive an honorary doctor's degree from Kiev University," a Foreign Ministry spokesman commented yesterday.

By allowing Lien to visit Kiev Ukraine has seriously violated its pledge on the Taiwan issue as stated in the Sino-Ukraine joint declaration on establishing bilateral relations.

"Taiwan's attempt to create 'two Chinas' or 'one China, one Taiwan' is doomed to failure, no matter what camouflage it may wear," said the spokesman.

"We firmly oppose countries which have diplomatic relations with China having any official contact with Taiwan, which is a part of China," he said.

According to the foreign press, Lien appeared in public yesterday at the University of Kiev, after vanishing mysteriously for two days. Ukraine has classified the Lien visit as "unofficial."

Ukraine has received visits by top Chinese leaders President Jiang Zemin, Premier Li Peng and Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee Qiao Shi in the last three years.

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Belarus

Belarus: Lukashenka Rejects Russian Proposal on Customs Committee

WS2108131096 Minsk BTK Television Network in Belarusian 1800 GMT 20 Aug 96

[Report by Svyatlana Ilyushenka]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Ilyushenka] On 23 June a decision was made to establish the Customs Committee of the Belarusian-Russian Community. Until now, experts have been drafting the committee's regulations. Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Vasiliy Serov has visited Minsk to discuss the draft regulations. Representatives of Russia's customs structures also arrived in Minsk to hold consultations with representatives of the Belarusian side.

The main issue on which the sides failed to reach agreement was Russia's proposal to exercise direct control over customs structures and over the joint Customs Committee. This would mean that the Customs Committee would be authorized to resolve all the financial, personnel, and other issues on Belarusian territory.

[Begin recording] [Vasil Shaladonaw, Belarus deputy minister for CIS issues — in Russian] We believe that this is a crucial issue which directly touches upon the Belarusian Constitution. Article 13 of the treaty on establishing the Belarusian-Russian Community envisions that joint decisions must not violate the two states' constitutions. Therefore, our stance is as follows: The Community Customs Committee should be established and pass its resolutions. To implement the Customs Committee Board's resolutions, the committee chairman should have the right to issue orders to central bodies, including the Belarusian Customs Committee. However, the latter should have the right to issue its own orders to convey the orders of the Community Customs Committee to the Belarusian customs services. Thus, we would retain our state sovereignty.

We have held a discussion attended by President Lukashenka. I would like to point out that the president firmly stated that he would observe constitutional provisions and would never ignore the Republic's legislation in force. Therefore, he stated that Belarus's stance is not a whim. It is objective reality and we should reach mutual understanding in the future.

As a result of the discussion, the Belarusian president, who is chairman of the Higher Council [of the Belarusian-Russian Community], decided to draft an instruction to create a Belarusian-Russian working group comprised of representatives of Belarusian and Russian customs bodies, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministries of CIS Issues and Justice which — within a week — should draft appropriate draft regulations that would not violate the two states' constitutions. The draft regulations should be submitted for examination by the Higher Council chairman. [end recording]

Belarus: Lukashenka Fails To Attend Roundtable on Current Problems

LD2108193196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1633 GMT 21 Aug 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Alyaksandr Lukashenka did not take part in the round table meeting in Minsk Wednesday of the country's political parties which had invited him on July 25 to discuss with them the country's social, political and economic problems.

They had also called on the president "not to add to the tension in the country, end the political games and attend to the social and economic problems."

Lukashenka went on the national radio on August 8 to say that "there is nothing to talk about now." What should be done, he thinks, is to work "closely" on the economic programs, drafted by experts in his headquarters and a team of independent experts, in order to make a final decision about the country's course.

The parties attending the round table discussion undertook to act within the framework of the Belarusian constitution and legislation; guarantee the observance of human rights and freedoms in Belarus; align with the constitution all the legislation, by-laws and decisions that the Constitutional Court has declared unconstitutional or inconsistent with the existing legislation; abide by the New Media Act, guarantee the freedom of the press and set up a public Supervisory Council for the National TV and Radio Company; ensure openness in the activities of the president, parliament and government in the framework of the existing legislation; and have the elections of parliament and local legislatures held on the day set by the Central Electoral Committee.

Its participants say that "protection of the country's constitution" is their top priority.

They intend to make a statement shortly which will analyze the situation in the country and the role to be played by the president in pulling the country out of crisis. Some parliamentary parties are likely to amends the questions in the president-initiated referendum or have more vital questions answered at the referendum.

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Representatives of the Belarusian Popular Front and the United Civil Party called for the starting of the impeachment procedure against Lukashenko.

Parliament chairman Semyon Sharetskiy told Interfax that "the situation in the country is critical enough for politically diametrically opposite parties to sit at the same table."

The relations between parliament and president must abide by the constitution, he said.

Sharetskiy was surprised that the proposed presidential amendments to the constitution had not been sent to parliament before they were known abroad.

Belarus: Lukashenka Issues Edicts on New Appointments

WS2208102196 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 0400 GMT 22 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka has signed a number of edicts on new appointments. Alyaksandr Paznyak has been appointed chairman of the Republic of Belarus State Committee for Youth. He has been given the status as first category employee of the state apparatus. Major General Yuryy Kalabrin has been appointed first deputy minister of internal affairs. He has been released from the post of deputy minister of internal affairs. Police Colonel Mikalay Lapatsik has been appointed first deputy chief of the Criminal Police Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The same edict released him from the post of the chief of the Mahilow Oblast Executive Committee Department of Internal Affairs. Police Colonel Vitali Apanasevich has been appointed chief of the Mahilow Oblast Executive Committee Department of Internal Affairs. The same edict released him from the post of the chief of the Homel Oblast Executive Committee Department of Internal Affairs.

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Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan: President's 747 May Give Clues to TWA Crash

MM2208085196 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 22 Aug 96 pp 1-2

[Article by Vladimir Ardayev: "Boeing for the President. It Cannot Be Ruled Out That Nursultan Nazarbayev Had Previously Flown on the Aircraft That Recently Exploded Over the Atlantic"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Kazakhstani journalist Erik Nurshin has carried out an investigation into the acquisition by Kazakhstan of a Boeing 747 for the republic's president. But an analysis of the cases of abuse and commercial machinations that accompanied the saga had a very unexpected result: The journalist concluded that there was an entirely probable link between two airliners — the one used by Nursultan Nazarbayev and the one that blew up over the Atlantic 17 July en route from New York.

Let us make it clear straightaway that all the assumptions, speculation, and conclusions which the author of the investigation came to (on Tuesday evening they were heard in the broadcast "Versiya," which was shown on Almaty's "M" commercial TV channel) are, naturally, not claiming to be the absolute truth, and in any event will remain just speculation and supposition. But a whole slew of facts that have been documented by the journalist merit some pretty serious attention.

The Boeing was acquired by Kazakhstan for President Nazarbayev in 1993. It was a 747-SP, designed for specific purposes: It had initially been designed for use on Pan American's long-haul non-stop routes. E. Nurshin's dossier contains a copy of a letter from John Poindexter, president of the U.S. Flightstar aviation corporation, to the Kazakhstani Government on the features of this model (judging by the text, it was in response to a request from the Kazakhstani Government itself). The letter writer, in particular, said that the 747-SP was neither "needed nor used for very long for the purposes for which it was built," since newer and more sophisticated Boeings had appeared which were intended for long-haul non-stop flights.

D. Poindexter said that the aircraft's main shortcoming is its very low level of safety — the fact is that in order to achieve the extra range, the model's fuselage was shortened (correspondingly reducing the number of seats) and, moreover, the caliber (thickness) of the aluminum used in the structure was reduced. In other words, Erik Nurshin explains (incidentally, he is a qualified aviation engineer with seven years' of work at the "Omega" defense aviation enterprise in Sevastopol under his belt), the shortened fuselage was welded to the cockpit insufficiently strongly, and this could potentially result in an accident whereby the cockpit detached itself from the fuselage.

John Poindexter considers the 747-SP "impractical," given the availability of other more modern Boeings such as the 747-200B.

Nonetheless, Kazakhstan acquired precisely this aircraft — a relatively aged 14-year-old example — for $17 million at a time when the market price for a similar model with half its design life left was no more than $9.5 million. Nurshin speculates that this highly disadvantageous purchase was carried out merely in the interests of some mysterious intermediary firm which was party to the deal.

The aircraft had been operated by TWA, and was then sold to American Airlines, where it was operated on Pacific long-haul routes. Subsequently, the airline withdrew 747-SP's from its routes and placed them in storage.

The disadvantageousness of the purchase was very soon evident. The aircraft did indeed easily cover long distances non-stop — as directly witnessed by this writer, who flew direct from Almaty to Washington on board it in early 1995. But the Boeing's great age resulted in constant breakdowns that caused the operators a lot of trouble. About a year ago the presidential plane, carrying out a commercial flight, was unable to take off from Seoul Airport. In less than two years of operation there had been around 300 faults, including some very serious ones.

Owning just one Boeing and absolutely lacking the overhaul and servicing base required for it, the Kazakhstani airmen had obtained a rather costly and impractical "toy" whose operation would result in nothing but losses — and pretty significant ones too (it is hard to term the head of state's prestige an economic category). Overhaul of the aircraft in Tel Aviv cost $400,000, replacing the engines cost $1.5 million.... Meanwhile President Nazarbayev himself used "his Boeing" just 10 times. But despite the fact that the aircraft was carrying out so-called commercial flights every week (specifically, to Frankfurt), it still recorded only losses — Nurshin calculates that these came to at least $10 million. To this should be added the mysterious fact that the presidential Boeing 747, which carried out many flights, was by no means on the books of the Kazakstan auye zholy [name as transliterated] national airline.

Incidentally, all the nuances relating to the acquisition and operation of the aircraft are Kazakhstan's affair. Although the author of the newspaper investigation

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came to his unexpected conclusions when he looked into these nuances or, as he put it, "cases of corruption in the Kazakhstani Government."

Now to turn to the actual conclusions. On 17 July an aircraft belonging to TWA — which had once owned the Kazakhstani president's Boeing — crashed into the waters of the Atlantic. At the time, Erik Nurshin claims, the [president's] aircraft had been sent once again from Kazakhstan to the United States to the technical center at West Palm Beach International Airport in Florida — as shown in the dossier by the instructions from Vladimir Ni, the Kazakhstani president's first deputy administrator of affairs. And, although the aircraft was being sent for a "cabin refit and technical service," it has still not returned to Kazakhstan. Could the Kazakhstani Boeing have once again ended up in the hands of TWA, which, as is now known, actively operated second-hand aircraft? It is unlikely, of course. But nor can it be completely ruled out.

The cockpit of the Boeing that crashed in the Atlantic had detached from the fuselage on take-off. According to E. Nurshin's theory, the Kazakhstani Boeing had always been in danger of this kind of accident. Finally, the number of passengers on the ill-fated plane (230) coincides exactly, according to Nurshin, with the capacity of the 747-SP owned by President Nazarbayev.

I would repeat that all this is, of course, mere speculation and supposition. But — who knows? — it might help to shed some light on the mysterious crash in the United States on the eve of the Olympics.

Kazakhstan: National Airline Declared Bankrupt

LD2108193896 Almaty Kazakh Television First Program Network in Russian 1400 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The main news today is the collapse of the national airline. This was predicted by the KHABAR agency as much as six months ago. Last night the decision was taken to liquidate the Kazakhstan Airways national joint-stock air company. A well-informed government source has given the KAZAKHSTAN TODAY agency a copy of a resolution, signed by Prime Minister Kazhegeldin, on measures to bring about the economic stabilization of civil aviation in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The republic's Committee for Management of State Property has been instructed to take organizational measures to set up a closed- type joint-stock company called Air Kazakhstan [name given in English], which is to be given the status of a national airline. Rustem Bekturov has been recommended for the post of chairman of the new company. The SHNE consulting firm is to act as consultant to the Air Kazakhstan joint-stock company. The Kazakh commercial bank will be engaged in financial management.

In addition, the State Committee for Management of State Property and the Ministry of Transport and Communications have been tasked with completing by 10 September the identification of airports of strategic importance to the republic which currently fall under the jurisdiction of regional air detachments. Open-type joint-stock companies will be set up on the basis of these. Deputy Prime Minister Garri Shtoik has been made responsible for implementing the resolution.

The decision to reform the republic's civil aviation radically has been taken at a time when the Kazakhstan Airways national joint-stock air company is on the brink of complete financial collapse. Transportation volumes are down 21 percent on the same period last year. Its capital assets are worn out and only 10 percent of its original aircraft and engine pool remains intact, all of it now obsolete. Its accounts payable exceed 9 billion tenge, whereas accounts receivable stand at 5.7 billion tenge. The managed monthly turnover of 130 million tenge does not cover current expenditure, and the company is running at an average monthly loss of 65 million tenge. The national airline has virtually lost the international passenger and freight transportation market.

Kazakhstan: Deputy Premier Welcomes Iranian Investment

LD1508211996 Tehran IRNA in English 1507 GMT 15 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Almaty, Aug. 15, IRNA — Deputy prime minister of Kazakhstan, Garriy Shtoyk invited Iranian investors and specialists to invest in his country and to help handle the production and industrial complexes in the republic. The Kazakh government paves the way for foreign investors and protects them in accordance with the constitution, said the minister in an interview with Islamic Republic News Agency here on Wednesday.

He said that there are many commonalities between Iran and Kazakhstan and that the republic considers the relations with Iran as specially important and valuable. "Iran has favourable capabalities in industrial and technical fields and we are interested in enjoying these potentials and the know-how of Iranian experts", said Shtoyk. He added that Iran has good resources to take part in Central Asian markets and Iranian businessmen should be more active to that end. According to the minister, the leaders of the two countries are willing to further broaden bilateral relations.

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The visit to Tehran, in May, of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Vice-President Hasan Habibi's visit to Almaty has brought about brighter horizons of cooperation between Iran and Kazakhstan, the Kazakh official noted.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan: Nazarov on Strengthening Ties With Russia, CIS

LD2108154396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1504 GMT 21 Aug 96

[By Valeriy Sevryukov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, August 21 (Itar-Tass) — "The strengthening of friendly political, economic and cultural relations with Russia and other CIS countries is a strategic task of the foreign policy of Tajikistan. However, this does not mean that Tajikistan is isolated from other regions of the world. We are open to cooperation with all who are ready for equal and partnership relations," Tajik Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarov told Itar-Tass on Wednesday after a meeting with Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister Boris Pastukhov.

According to Nazarov, during the talks, the two sides discussed the settlement of the intra-Tajik conflict.

"We consider as before that the conflict can be settled only by peaceful means," he said.

The Tajik leadership is ready to seek a compromise solution with the opposition and ensure its "smooth growth into civil society," exclusively on the basis of the existing legal norms and the constitution, Nazarov said.

"This means that we agree to give the opposition seats in the apparatus of the president, the government and all structures of management from rural regions to the centre," the Tajik minister noted.

Such a position is fully understood and supported by the Russian side, Nazarov said.

As for the terms of conducting a regular round of the talks on the Tajik settlement, they have not been determined yet, although there is an agreement that such a meeting will be held in Ashgabat, Nazarov said.

In his turn, he added that Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov is ready for talks with leader of the Tajik opposition Sayed Abdullo Nuri without any preliminary terms and reservations.

This meeting will apparently take place in Moscow and allow the sides to agree on the widening and strengthening of the cease-fire regime, as well as work out necessary measures to implement the Tehran 1995 agreement.

In addition, the two sides also discussed the ways of Tajikistan's more active involvement in the integration processes going on in the CIS.

In this connection, Pastukhov and Nazarov considered the possibility of Tajikistan's admission into the Customs Union and the signing of a treaty with Russia on dual citizenship.

Nazarov is currently in Moscow as a member of the Tajik delegation led by Prime Minister Yahyo Azimov.

The delegates arrived in Moscow to attend the festivities devoted to the 5th anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Tajikistan: Moscow Concerned Over Tajik-Afghan Border Issue

LD2108163696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1527 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Aug 21 (Interfax) — Moscow is concerned about the situation on the Tajik-Afghan border and believes that its destabilization threatens not only Tajikistan but Russia and CIS Central Asian countries as well, First Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Boris Pastukhov said at a meeting with Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Turkmen and Uzbek ambassadors in Moscow Tuesday.

Pastukhov asked the ambassadors to communicate Moscow's concern to the leadership of their countries, according to a Foreign Ministry press release sent to Interfax Wednesday.

During the meeting Pastukhov pointed to the "sharp aggravation of the situation near the Tajik-Afghan border in connection with the continuing concentration of Tajik opposition rebels in the border area on Afghan territory."

He also pointed to continuing provocations on the part of the rebels, the press release reads.

The meeting participants stressed the need to continue joint efforts to strengthen the security of the Tajik-Afghan border.

The meeting was also attended by Russian presidential envoy for Tajikistan Yevgeny Mikhailov and deputy head of the Russian Federal Border Service Alexey Kozhevnikov.

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Tajikistan: Afghan Envoy Talks With Russian Border Commander

LD2108165396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1534 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Aug 21 (Interfax) - The Afghan leadership intends to take measures to ensure a security zone along the Tajik-Afghan border, Said Ibragim Higmat, Afghan charge d'affairs ad interim in Tajikistan, said on the instruction of Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani during a meeting with Deputy Commander of the Group of Russian Border Troops R. Yankauskas in Dushanbe on Wednesday.

The Afghan leadership will take measures necessary to prevent actions by armed formations of the Movement for Islamic Rebirth of Tajikistan in this zone, the Afghan diplomat said, according to the Russian Federal Border Service press center.

The situation on the Tajik-Afghan border was considered during the meeting.

The sides voiced concern about the continuing deterioration of the situation on the border because of illegal actions by the armed Tajik opposition.

The sides agreed to maintain regular contacts in order to react to changes in the situation promptly, the Russian Federal Border Service press center said.

Tajikistan: UN Observers Again Attempt To Reach Tavil-Dara

LD2108124596 (Clandestine) Voice of Free Tajikistan in Tajik 0600 GMT 21 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dietrich Merrem, the UN secretary general's special envoy in Tajikistan, has made another attempt to send the UN's military observers to Tavil-Dara district [central Tajikistan conflict zone]. It is planned that the observer groups will try to enter the conflict zone along the Kalai Khumb, Komsomolabad-Tavil-Dara, and Khovaling highways on Merrem's instructions today.

A Payki Khuroson [name of Voice of Free Tajikistan's news program] commentator says it is likely the United Nations will fail in its current attempt too, because one has doubts whether Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov's regime will permit a UN observer group to enter the center of Tavil-Dara district now that it has been recaptured by the Tajik mojahedin.

Tajikistan: Rakhmanov Personally Monitors Cease-Fire Accord

LD2008180196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1628 GMT 20 Aug 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov personally monitors the government's implementation of the ceasefire agreements with the opposition and insists on a political settlement of the conflict, Senior Presidential Advisor Zafar Ikromov told a news conference in Dushanbe. Ikromov is also a co-chairman of the joint commission for implementing the Tehran agreements.

Rakhmanov may meet with opposition leader Abdullo Nuri in early September, Ikromov suggested.

The government will not stand another lap of civil war in Tajikistan and will prevent it with political methods, Ikromov underlined. He hoped that the opposition leaders will "comply with their obligations to peacefully settle disputes, as the government does."

So far, the opposition has been violating the Ashgabat ceasefire agreement, Ikromov said.

The government pulled out all Presidential Guards, some security and interior troops from the Tavildara district, Ikromov recalled. However, the opposition made use of it as it undertook an offensive and seized Tavildara and a number of neighboring villages, he said.

Both sides took casualties in the clashes, Ikromov said. "There are victims among civilians as well, but their exact number is still unknown," he said.

Military sources in Dushanbe said government troops had lost about 30 servicemen on August 16 alone.

The sharply aggravated situation endangered the deployment of U.N. military observers in the Tavildara district, earlier planned for August 21, Ikromov said.

The Tajik government agreed to exchange two opposition activists, the Sanginov brothers, for the hostages captured by an opposition unit in the Yavan district of the republic, he said.

IF [INTERFAX] Note: The opposition unit had captured four senior law enforcers of the Yavan district last weekend, demanding four of their imprisoned comrades be freed. Two of them are people of field commander Rakhmon whose unit carried out the hostage-taking operation. The ultimatum will expire Tuesday evening.

"However, except for the Sanginov brothers the other people indicated by the opposition are neither in Tajikistan's detention centers, nor in prisons," Ikromov said.

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"The reaction of the opposition leaders, particularly Rakhmon who is empowered to make decisions on this issue, is still unknown," he said.

The government wants to exchange hostages all for all, because it fears for the lives of the remaining ones, Ikromov said.

Meanwhile, the situation in Tursunzade, a city located 60 kilometers to the west from Dushanbe, has become aggravated again.

IF Note: Last weekend, Dushanbe announced that the conflict in Tursunzade, where two warring factions clashed, had been localized. A special government commission led by Deputy Prime Minister Ismat Eshmirzoyev went to the city to "settle all differences in a peaceful way and stabilize the situation in this region of Tajikistan."

The warring factions clashed again in the center of Tursunzade Monday evening, Presidential Defense Advisor Mirzob Kabirov told Interfax Tuesday.

The shootout lasted for about half an hour and involved over 30 people, Kabirov said. Two militants were killed.

The social and political situation in Tursunzade "remains complicated," Kabirov said. The faction leaders, Kadyr Abdullayev and Erkin Azamov, attended government-sponsored talks behind closed doors Tuesday morning.

Law enforcers are bringing back order to the city, Kabirov said. More outposts were planted in Tursunzade and along the road that connects it with the capital.

Moscow is increasingly concerned about the latest events in Tajikistan, a Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman said Tuesday.

The ceasefire and POW exchange agreements, as well as the prospects for resumption of peace talks, are under a question mark, he said.

It is because of the opposition's unconstructive line that the Rakhmaanov-Nuri meeting failed, he underlined.

"The Russian side calls of the Tajik opposition leadership to drop the methods of resolving the Tajik issue by force, which only deteriorate the situation and multiply the suffering of the people," he said.

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